

Exclusive Rights

Joshua 6:15-20

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I. Today's The Day vs. 15-16

a. Repeats Instruction

- i. The climactic episode is initiated by the episode-beginning *wayěhi*, "and it happened," and the same verb, "to get up early (when the dawn broke)," found in v. 12. The actions were the same as previously (see NIV's "in the same manner"), but they were executed seven times on this day (hence the early start, undoubtedly). The second half of v. 15 shows that it was only (*raq*) on this day (and no other) that this happened. The marching action on the seventh day is described much more quickly than for days one and two, since the story's climax quickly approaches.
- ii. In strict accord with God's instructions (vv. 4–5), Joshua commanded the people to shout when the priests gave one long, sustained blast on their horns (v. 16). Once again, the already-accomplished fact that the Lord had given Israel the land is reported (now, it is "the city," v. 16). The report of the execution of his command is delayed until v. 20, however, by his instructions regarding the Israelites' treatment of Rahab and their handling of the things that had been devoted to destruction.

II. Set Apart vs. 17-19

a. Under the ban

- i. Ban - dedication to the secularly unusable to destruction or to cultic use only, **ban, what is banned**
 1. affirms that Yahweh owns it exclusively and seals the fate of everything in it." As God's "exclusive property, *hērem* enjoys the highest degree of holiness
 2. devotion, dedication to the secularly unusable to destruction or to cultic use only, **ban, what is banned** The idea of devoting an object for service to God appears in Lev 27:28. Whatever is devoted to the Lord, whether man, animal, or property, is considered most holy by God and is therefore not to be sold or redeemed by substituting something else. According to Num 18:14 and Ezk 44:29, all such objects are to be given to the priests for the support of the religious ceremonies. The gold, silver, bronze, and iron from Jericho, for instance, were so designated

3. ban,” was not only a program for Israel to carry out. It was also a temptation in Israel’s way (compare 1 Sam 15). They, too, could be placed under חרם if they violated the program of חרם set out for them by their leader. Violation endangered not just an individual, but the entire community. This is demonstrated clearly in the narrative of chap. 7. The danger lay in the fact that “the items to be banned were the Lord’s portion. As such these items were holy and should not be handled carelessly.
 4. But it is also a strong part of Deuteronomistic theology (Deut 7:20). That certain elements might be rescued from the ban and devoted to the treasury of God (v 19) is a specification not mentioned in Deuteronomy and represents one stage in Israel’s interpretation of the ban. חרם in 6:17 is the only instance in the OT where men and goods are included. Everywhere else the verb, not the noun, is used in reference to men. It refers to the cultic dedication of these men and things, so that God, not man, receives glory and profit. What is of importance for the present text is that חרם is understood as the goal of the entire conquest operation (cf. Josh 11:14, 20). Jericho’s conquest is set up as the prime example of obedience to divine command (cf. the negative example of Ai that follows)
- ii. Belong the Lord
 1. Silver, Gold, Bronze, Iron
 - a. Holy to the Lord
 - i. Treasury of the Lord
 - ii. Certain items were to be set apart for destruction, and if they were not, Israel itself would be subject to the same fate; Israel itself would become “a devoted thing.” Verse 19 continues to develop this idea. The treasures of Jericho were to be set apart for the Lord, since they were sacred, that is, holy.
 - b. Rahab
 - i. חרם is not carried out totally. Rahab and her family escape. The importance of this is underlined by the etiological formula placed at the conclusion (v 25). Israel understands its own identity to be that of mixed blood (cf. Exod 12:38). At least implicitly Israel’s theologians understood that foreigners were welcome in Israel when they confessed the God of Israel (2:9–11) and helped the people of Israel (cf. 6:25).
 - ii. Rahab was specifically exempted from this destruction in the book’s first reference to her since chap. 2 (v. 17b). This exemption stands in tension with Yahweh’s instructions for dealing with the peoples in Canaan in Deut 7:1–5 and 20:16–18. Deuteronomy 20:16–18 states, “However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them—the

Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.” However, as we have seen earlier, the crucial difference between Rahab and the other Canaanites was her demonstration of faith, both in deeds and words.

- c. Under the Ban- Lev 27:28; Deut 20:17
 - i. Only Keep for Yourself
 1. Do not covet - devote; to devote to destruction, esp. war-booty: cities
 - a. Covet - Whether expressed by *’wh* or *ḥmd*, the expression “desire” acquires a theological significance whenever the desire in question not only breaks human rules of behavior but even violates divine instructions. Such a situation appears both in Eve’s desire to eat from the fruits of the tree that stands in the midst of God’s garden, in spite of divine prohibition (Gen 3:6), and in the desire of the Israelites in the wilderness for food other than manna (Num 11:4; Ps 78:29–30; 106:14). These desires amount to a rejection of God’s leadership and care. Such human behavior, directed against God, is understood theologically as sin necessitating divine punishment.
 - b. Behind this idea is the Hebrew verb *ḥāram* and noun *ḥērem*. The verb can be rendered “to devote to the LORD” or “to devote to destruction” or “to completely destroy,” and the noun can be rendered as “devoted things” or “destruction.” The NIV text note makes clear the connection between the idea of devotion and destruction: “The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.”
 - c. Take them from under the ban
 - d. Make the camp accursed
 - i. Bring trouble- to **entangle, put into disorder, bring disaster, throw into confusion, ruin**
 - ii. was not only a program for Israel to accomplish. It was a temptation in Israel’s way. She could be placed under *חרם* if she violated the program of *חרם* set out for her by her leader. The danger was not only individual. The individual’s act endangered the entire community. This is seen clearly in the next narrative

III. Let's Get It v. 20

- a. Trumpets
- b. Shouted
 - i. Wall Fell Down Flat
- c. Every Man went straight
 - i. Took the City
 1. Israel does not enter the city, according to Robinson, as a “conquering army rushing through breached walls, but as a cultically prepared people going up to the place of theophany. The city falls to God alone.” The marching language of the verse carries strong military overtones. It is no longer procession language. The people march up to the city in military order and capture the city.
 2. The actual “battle” of Jericho is described very briefly in v. 20, and the story line suspended after v. 16 is now resumed, with the report of the execution of Joshua’s command that the people should shout.
 3. In contrast to the detailed telling and retelling of the great miracle at the Jordan River (3:14–17 and throughout chap. 4), the great miracle of the walls collapsing is told here in one terse statement at the end of v. 20. However, this fits the general outlook of the book, that military matters belonged to God and that he would effortlessly fight Israel’s battles. Protracted attention to battle details would undermine this sense of the effortless taking of the land of Canaan. What is emphasized in this account are the ritual preparations for the battle (vv. 2–19) and the follow-up to the taking of the city, in which faithfulness to earlier commands and agreements is highlighted (vv. 22–26). The Book of Hebrews adds to this perspective: it was “by faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days” (Heb 11:30)