

# Deuteronomy 13:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

## Analysis

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The judgment: 'But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.' The Hebrew doubling *harog taharog* (הָרַג תִּהְרַג, 'kill, you shall kill') emphasizes certainty. Shockingly, the family member discovering apostasy must initiate execution—'thine hand shall be first.' This prevents false accusations (you wouldn't casually accuse family to death) while demanding ultimate covenant loyalty. The 'hand of all the people' indicates community participation, distributing responsibility and preventing vendetta. This corporate execution maintained covenant purity and deterred apostasy. The severity reflects spiritual death's horror exceeding physical death.

## Historical Context

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Old Testament records few cases of this law's application, possibly because threat deterred apostasy or because enforcement was lax. Achan's family died with him for covenant violation (Joshua 7:24-25). Under theocracy, civil authorities enforced religious law. New Testament separation of church and state means church discipline, not civil execution, addresses apostasy (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13). However, divine judgment on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) shows God still takes covenant violation seriously, executing judgment directly when appropriate.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How do we understand Old Testament capital punishment for religious crimes in relation to New Testament church discipline?
2. What does the severity of this command teach about how seriously God views idolatry?
3. How should churches handle members who abandon core doctrines or lead others astray?

## Interlinear Text

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|                |                              |                       |                |                   |     |
|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----|
| כִּי           | תִהְיֶה נֹכַח                | תִהְיֶה נֹכַח         | יְדֵי          | תִהְיֶה           | בְּ |
| H3588          | But thou shalt surely        | But thou shalt surely | him thine hand | H1961             | H0  |
|                | H2026                        | H2026                 | H3027          |                   |     |
| ה              | לְהַמִּית אוֹ                | יְדֵי                 | כָּל           | הָעָם             |     |
| shall be first | upon him to put him to death | him thine hand        | H3605          | of all the people |     |
| H7223          | H4191                        | H3027                 |                | H5971             |     |
| בְּאַחֲרָיָהּ: |                              |                       |                |                   |     |
| and afterwards |                              |                       |                |                   |     |
| H314           |                              |                       |                |                   |     |