

Exodus 32:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

Analysis

Moses delivers God's command beginning כִּי-אָמַר יְהֹוָה (koh-amar Adonai, Thus says the Lord), the prophetic formula establishing divine authority. The threefold instruction (put on swords, go through the camp gate to gate, slay) is stark. The phrase אִישׁ אֶת-אֶחָיו וְאִישׁ אֶת-רֶ�עָהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת-קָרְבָּנוֹ (ish et-achiv ve-ish et-re'ehu ve-ish et-qerovo, every man his brother, companion, and neighbor) emphasizes the judgment would cut across all natural relationships. This wasn't random violence but covenant enforcement—like Phinehas later (Num 25:7-8), those who break covenant in capital ways deserve capital punishment. God's holiness permits no compromise.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaties included curse clauses for covenant violation. This execution was treaty enforcement, not genocide. The Levites' obedience demonstrated covenant loyalty exceeded tribal/family loyalty.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's holiness require severe consequences for covenant violation?
2. When does mercy become complicity with evil, and judgment become necessary?

Interlinear Text

שׁ	יְמֹן	וְשָׁבָא	לְ	אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	וְ	אֶת	מִן	לְפָנֶיךָ	אָמֵן	רַבָּה
And he said	H0	H3541	And he said	the LORD	God	of Israel	Put				
H559			H559	H3068	H430	H3478	H7760				
וְ	לְשָׁבָב	בְּפִנְךָ	וְ	עַל	מִרְכָּבְךָ	וְ	עַבְרֵךְ	וְ	בְּבֹנוֹת	וְ	לְשָׁבָב
and every man	his sword	H5921	by his side	and go	in and out	from gate					
H376	H2719		H3409	H5674	H7725	H8179					
וְ	לְשָׁבָב	בְּמִקְדָּשֶׁךָ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ
from gate	throughout the camp	H4264	and slay	and every man	H853	his brother					
H8179			H2026	H376	H251						
וְ	לְשָׁבָב	בְּמִקְדָּשֶׁךָ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ
and every man	his companion	and every man	H853	H7453	H376	his neighbour					
H376						H7138					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 25:5 (References Israel): And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

Luke 14:26 (Parallel theme): If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

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