

Numbers 14:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

Analysis

Go not up, for the LORD is not among you—Moses' urgent warning (אַל-תָּעַל, al-ta'alu) identifies the fatal flaw in Israel's plan: divine absence. The phrase **is not among you** reverses the covenant promise 'I will dwell among them' (Exodus 25:8), showing that presumptuous disobedience forfeits God's presence.

That ye be not smitten before your enemies—The verb **smitten** (נִגְּנַב nagaph, routed/struck down) describes divinely-permitted military defeat. Throughout Israel's history, victories depended on covenant obedience (Joshua 6-8; Judges 7; 1 Samuel 14), while disobedience guaranteed defeat regardless of military strength (Joshua 7; 1 Samuel 4). Paul warns Christians against presuming on grace: 'Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall' (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Historical Context

Moses spoke this warning after God decreed wilderness wandering (14:26-35). The people's attempt to reverse judgment through self-initiated action demonstrates fundamental misunderstanding of covenant relationship—God determines blessing and judgment, not human religious activity.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What contemporary 'ministry initiatives' proceed without confirming God's presence and blessing?
2. How can believers discern the difference between God-directed action and self-willed religious activity?
3. What spiritual defeats in your life might trace back to proceeding without God's clear presence and approval?

Interlinear Text

אַל	בְּקָרְבָּךְ	מִ	לֹא
אַל	בְּקָרְבָּךְ	מִ	לֹא
H408 Go not up	H3588 for the LORD	H3068 is not among	H3808
H5927		H7130	
תַּעֲלֵה	לֹפֶנְךָ	אַבִּיכֶם:	לֹפֶנְךָ
you that ye be not smitten	before	your enemies	before
H5062	H6440	H341	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 1:42 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies.