

Numbers 15:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

Analysis

One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you—The climactic restatement uses synonymous parallelism for emphasis: **אחת תורה** (torah achat, 'one law') and **אחד משפט** (mishpat echad, 'one judgment/ordinance'). No loopholes, no dual standards. This revolutionary egalitarianism flows from monotheism—one God demands one way of approach.

Paul quotes this principle in Romans 2:11-16, arguing that God judges Jew and Gentile by the same standard. The verse devastates both Jewish presumption ('we have the law') and Gentile excuse ('we didn't know'). Christ is the fulfillment of 'one law'—the only mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5).

Historical Context

This declaration was countercultural in the extreme. Ancient Near Eastern religions had complex hierarchies: priests vs. laity, citizens vs. foreigners, men vs. women. Israel's 'one law' for native and alien foreshadowed the gospel's leveling effect: 'All have sinned... justified freely by his grace' (Romans 3:23-24).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the double emphasis ('one law AND one manner') reinforce the completeness of spiritual equality before God?
2. In what ways does the principle of unified law both comfort (no favoritism) and challenge (no excuses) all people?
3. How is Christ Himself the ultimate 'one law and one manner' for approaching God (John 14:6)?

Interlinear Text

לֹא מִלְחָמָה אֶת אֶתְּנָאָתֶךָ וְמִשְׁפָּט תְּנַצְּרָת

law
H8451

One
H259

manner
H4941

One
H259

H1961

H0

לֹא רְאֵלָגָר

רְאֵלָגָר

אֶתְּנָאָתֶךָ

shall be for you and for the stranger

H1616

that sojourneth

H1481

H854

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