

Numbers 15:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people were in ignorance.

Analysis

And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them—God's forgiveness extended beyond ethnic Israelites to include ger (גֶּר, "stranger" or "sojourner"), Gentiles living among Israel who submitted to covenant obligations. This inclusion anticipates the gospel's universal scope: atonement available to "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17). The ger wasn't a temporary visitor but a permanent resident alien who participated in Israel's worship and came under their laws.

The phrase **seeing all the people were in ignorance** provides the basis for corporate forgiveness. The sin was committed unknowingly, qualifying for atonement rather than judgment. This distinguishes from high-handed rebellion (v. 30-31) which brought being "cut off." God's justice required punishment for sin; His mercy provided substitutionary atonement for the repentant. This balance reveals both God's holiness (sin must be addressed) and grace (He provides the solution).

Historical Context

The ger (sojourner/stranger) occupied a unique legal category in Israel—not native-born, yet not foreign either. Examples include Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah the Hittite. They could participate in Passover if circumcised (Exodus 12:48-49) and were protected by specific laws (Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:33-34). This provision

demonstrated that covenant relationship with Yahweh wasn't purely ethnic—faith and commitment mattered more than genealogy. This foreshadows Paul's teaching that true Israel consists of faith-descendants, not merely flesh-descendants of Abraham (Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 3:29).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the inclusion of "strangers" in Israel's atonement prefigure the gospel going to Gentiles?
2. What does God's provision for sojourners teach about the church welcoming outsiders?
3. How should this passage shape Christian attitudes toward immigrants and refugees?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| וְשָׁרְאָה | ל | בָּנִים | עַדְתָּה | לְכָל | וְגַסְלָל | וְ |
| And it shall be forgiven | | | all the congregation | of the children | of Israel | |
| | H5545 | | H5712 | | H1121 | H3478 |
| וְ | לְ | בָּנִים | עַדְתָּה | לְכָל | וְ | וְ |
| and the stranger | that sojourneth | among | them | seeing | all the people | |
| H1616 | H1481 | H8432 | H3588 | H3605 | H5971 | |
| בְּשַׁגְגָה: | | | | | | |
| were in ignorance | | | | | | |
| | H7684 | | | | | |