

Numbers 15:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

Analysis

The incident of the Sabbath-breaker immediately follows laws about presumptuous sin (verses 30-31). His deliberate gathering of sticks on the Sabbath constituted 'high-handed' rebellion against God's explicit command. The severity of the punishment demonstrates that covenant violation, especially when willful and public, threatened the entire community's relationship with God.

Historical Context

This occurred during the wilderness period when God's holiness was being impressed upon Israel through dramatic judgments (Nadab and Abihu, Korah's rebellion, etc.). The Sabbath command was foundational to the covenant (Exodus 20:8-11), making its violation a direct challenge to God's authority.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the holiness of God inform your understanding of obedience?

2. What 'small' sins might actually constitute 'high-handed' rebellion against known truth?

Interlinear Text

וְהִי ו	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּמִדְבָּר	וַיִּמְצְאוּ
H1961	And while the children	of Israel	were in the wilderness	they found
	H1121	H3478	H4057	H4672
אִישׁ	מִקֵּץ שׁ	עֵצִים	בַּיּוֹם	הַשַּׁבָּת:
a man	that gathered	sticks	day	upon the sabbath
H376	H7197	H6086	H3117	H7676

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