

Numbers 16:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

Analysis

All Israel 'fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.' The fleeing crowd feared corporate judgment, recognizing their own vulnerability to God's wrath. Yet this terror-induced reverence proved temporary, as they rebelled again the next day (v.41), showing fear-based obedience produces no lasting transformation.

Historical Context

The visible, audible judgment created momentary sobriety throughout the camp. However, within 24 hours Israel again accused Moses of killing God's people, demonstrating how quickly fear fades without heart change.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why is fear of punishment insufficient to produce genuine faith and lasting obedience?
2. How quickly do you forget God's demonstrated power when facing new temptations?

Interlinear Text

וְיָרַדְתֶּן

לְבָמָאָשָׁרְיכָלְבָמָ

They and all that appertained to them went down

H1992

H3605

H834

H0

H3381

פָאָרָץ עַלְיָהִם וְתַכְסֵשָׁא לְהַמִּים
alive into the pit closed

H2416

H7585

H3680

H5921

and the earth

H776

מַתְ וְרַיְאַבְדְתֶן
upon them and they perished from among the congregation

H6

H8432

H6951

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