

Numbers 16:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

Analysis

"To be a memorial unto the children of Israel"—zikaron (זִקְרָן) means a reminder, memorial, or monument designed to prevent forgetting. The specific warning: **"that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD"**—defines "stranger" (zar, זֶר) as anyone outside Aaron's lineage. This exclusivity offends democratic sensibilities but establishes that access to God comes through His appointed means, not human presumption.

"That he be not as Korah, and as his company"—the memorial warns future generations that Korah's fate awaits those who reject God's mediatorial order. Hebrews 10:19-22 reveals Christ as the fulfillment—we now approach through His priesthood alone, making unauthorized worship still deadly (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Historical Context

This memorial functioned throughout Israel's history until the first temple's destruction (586 BC). The altar plating reminded Israel for over 800 years that God determines access terms. The New Testament transforms the principle—Christ's exclusive mediation (1 Timothy 2:5) fulfills Aaronic exclusivity, not abolishing but perfecting the requirement for appointed access to God.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's exclusive priesthood fulfill rather than contradict the Aaronic memorial's warning?
2. Why does God insist on appointed mediators rather than allowing direct individual access on human terms?
3. In what ways do modern worship innovations risk the presumption Korah's memorial warns against?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	כִּאֵשׁ	רֹא	לֹא	מְעֻנָּה	וְשָׁרָא	לְ	לְבָנִים	זִכְרָה	וְ
To be a memorial	unto the children	of Israel		H4616	that				H3808
H2146	H1121	H3478			H834				
אֶת	כִּאֵשׁ	רֹא	לֹא	מְעֻנָּה	וְשָׁרָא	לְ	מִן	בְּעֵ	אֶת
come near	no stranger	H2114	that	H3808	which is not of the seed				of Aaron
H7126	H376		H834		H2233				H175
וְ	לֹא	כִּאֵשׁ	רֹא	לֹא	לְפָנֵי	קָרְבָּן	כִּתְבַּת	לְפָנֵי	יְהִי
H1931	to offer	incense	before	H6440	as the LORD		H3068	H3808	וְ
	H6999	H7004						H1961	
וְ	לֹא	כִּאֵשׁ	רֹא	לֹא	יְהִי	הָלֶא	וְ	וְ	וְ
that he be not as Korah	and as his company		that		H3068	H1961			
H7141	H5712		H834						
וְ	לֹא	כִּאֵשׁ	רֹא	לֹא	יְהִי	הָלֶא	וְ	וְ	וְ
to him by the hand	of Moses	H0	that		H1696	H3068			
H3027	H4872		H834						
וְ	לֹא	מִשְׁנָה	הָלֶא	וְ					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 3:10 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

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