

Numbers 25:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

Analysis

God commanded Moses, 'Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun'—public execution of ringleaders to turn away divine wrath. The severity reflects the seriousness of covenant violation. Public judgment of leaders who lead others astray demonstrates that influence increases accountability. Such dramatic action was necessary to preserve the entire community.

Historical Context

Public execution 'before the sun' meant in broad daylight, visible to all. This open judgment served as warning and deterrent. The method (hanging or impaling) added humiliation to death, emphasizing the shameful nature of their sin. The practice anticipated later instructions about dealing with covenant breakers (Deuteronomy 13:6-11).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does church discipline today reflect the principle that public sin requires public judgment?
2. Why is leading others into sin more serious than sinning privately?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֵל	מֹשֶׁה	קַח	אֶת	כָּל	רֹאשֵׁי י
said	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	Take	H853	H3605	all the heads
H559	H3068		H4872	H3947			H7218
הָעָם	וְהוֹקֵעַ	אוֹתָם	יְהוָה	נֶגֶד	הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ		
of the people	and hang them up	H853	And the LORD	before	against the sun		
H5971	H3363		H3068	H5048	H8121		
וְיָשׁוּב	חֲרֹן	אַף	יְהוָה	מִשְׁכָּאֵל:			
may be turned away	that the fierce	anger	And the LORD	from Israel			
H7725	H2740	H639	H3068	H3478			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 13:17 (References Lord): And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers;

Deuteronomy 4:3 (References Lord): Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.

Deuteronomy 21:23 (References Lord): His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is

accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Numbers 25:11 (References Israel): Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

2 Samuel 21:6 (References Lord): Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.