

Numbers 27:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Analysis

The daughters' testimony about their father—'Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah'—establishes his righteous character. They distinguished their father from Korah's rebels (Numbers 16) who died under divine judgment. The phrase 'but died in his own sin' acknowledges that Zelophehad died under the wilderness generation's judgment for unbelief at Kadesh (Numbers 14:29-35), but had not committed the aggravated rebellion of Korah. This nuanced distinction shows that degrees of sin exist, though all sin brings death. Some die in general judgment; others in special judgment for particular wickedness.

Historical Context

Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16) resulted in immediate, spectacular judgment—the earth swallowed the rebels and fire consumed their 250 followers. This divine wrath marked their sin as uniquely heinous—challenging God's appointed priesthood. The wilderness generation's death sentence, while still judgment, came through natural death over forty years. The daughters distinguished their father from the worse category, arguing he deserved inheritance despite dying under general judgment.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Scripture distinguish between degrees of sin and judgment?
2. What does it mean that all die for sin, but some face special judgment?
3. How should we evaluate people who die under general judgment versus specific divine wrath?

Interlinear Text

אָבִינוּ	מֵת	בַּמִּדְבָּר	וְהָיָה	לֹא	הָיָה	בֵּית וְנֹכַח
Our father	but died	in the wilderness	H1931	H3808	H1961	and he was not in
H1	H4191	H4057				H8432

בְּעֵדָת	הַנִּשְׁאָדִים	עַל	יְהוָה
in the company	of them that gathered themselves together	H5921	against the LORD
H5712	H3259		H3068

בְּעֵדָת	קִי כֹהֵן	כִּי	בְּחַטָּא וְ	מֵת	וְיָנִי יָם	לֹא
in the company	of Korah	H3588	in his own sin	but died	and had no sons	H3808
H5712	H7141		H2399	H4191	H1121	

לֹא	הָיָה
H1961	H0

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 18:4 (Sin): Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Numbers 14:35 (References Lord): I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

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