

Numbers 31:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

Analysis

God commands Moses to 'avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites' for their role in the Baal-Peor incident (Num 25). This divine judgment demonstrates God's holy hatred of sin and protection of His covenant people. The Hebrew 'naqam' (avenge) indicates righteous retribution, not personal revenge. Significantly, this is Moses' final military act before death - the leader who interceded for Israel numerous times must execute judgment on those who led Israel into idolatry and immorality. This foreshadows Christ who combines perfect mercy with perfect justice, saving His people while judging impenitent rebels (2 Thess 1:7-9).

Historical Context

The Midianites, related to Israel through Abraham and Keturah (Gen 25:1-2), should have been allies. However, Balaam advised them to seduce Israel into Baal worship through intermarriage and immorality (Num 31:16, Rev 2:14). This resulted in a plague killing 24,000 Israelites. The judgment came 38 years into wilderness wanderings, as Israel prepared to enter Canaan. Moses' involvement ensured continuity - the same leader who saw God's judgment on Egypt now executed it on Israel's seducers.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you balance showing love to unbelievers while maintaining holy separation from worldly values?
2. Are there 'Midianites' in your life - influences that seem harmless but are leading you toward spiritual compromise?

Interlinear Text

נָקַם	נִקְמַת	בְּנֵי י	יִשְׂרָאֵל	מֵאֵת	הַמִּדְיָנִים	אַחֲרֵי
Avenge		the children	of Israel		of the Midianites	afterward
H5358	H5360	H1121	H3478	H853	H4084	H310
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תִּגָּדַד	אֶל	עַמִּיךָ:				
shalt thou be gathered		unto thy people				
H622	H413	H5971				

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 27:13 (Parallel theme): And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

Revelation 6:10 (Parallel theme): And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Judges 2:10 (References Israel): And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.