

# Numbers 31:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses;

## Analysis

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**Eleazar the priest said...This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses**—the Hebrew *chuqqah* (ordinance/statute) indicates a permanent, binding regulation, not temporary instruction. Eleazar's citation of Torah (law) emphasizes that these purification requirements weren't arbitrary rules but divine revelation. The priest's role as interpreter and enforcer of ceremonial law ensured proper understanding and compliance.

This verse marks a transition: after Moses' rebuke (v.14-18), Eleazar provides detailed implementation of purification laws. The cooperation between prophet (Moses) and priest (Eleazar) shows complementary leadership—Moses declared God's will, Eleazar administered its ritual execution. In Christ, these roles unite: He is both Prophet revealing God's word and High Priest administering perfect cleansing (Hebrews 3:1, 4:14). The church's teaching ministry similarly combines biblical proclamation with practical application.

## Historical Context

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Eleazar, Aaron's son, became high priest after Aaron's death (Numbers 20:25-28). His role included teaching Torah (Leviticus 10:11), making judicial decisions using Urim and Thummim (Numbers 27:21), and overseeing tabernacle service. His specific involvement in post-warfare purification ensured correct ritual application preventing corporate defilement. The reference to 'ordinance of the law which the

LORD commanded Moses' likely points to Numbers 19's red heifer ceremony and related purity laws in Leviticus 11-15. The priest's authoritative teaching prevented individual soldiers from improvising purification methods, maintaining community holiness through standardized obedience.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. Do you submit your spiritual practices to Scripture's authority and church teaching, or do you improvise based on personal preference?
2. How does Christ's combination of prophetic and priestly offices give you confidence He both reveals and accomplishes your complete cleansing?

## Interlinear Text

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הָבֵא יָם	הַצֵּב אֶ	אֲנִישׁ י	אֶל	הַכֹּהֵן	אֶלְעָזָר ר	וַיֹּאמֶר
which went	of war	unto the men	H413	the priest	And Eleazar	said
H935	H6635	H582		H3548	H499	H559
צִוָּה	אֲשֶׁר	הַתּוֹכָה	חֻקַּת	זֶאת	לְמִלְחָמָה	ה
commanded	of the law	This is the ordinance	H2708	H2063	to the battle	
H6680	H8451				H4421	
מֹשֶׁה:	אֶת	יְהוָה				
Moses	H853	which the LORD				
H4872		H3068				