

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

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

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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

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

הָבָא יְמִינְךָ אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶת אַמְתָר
said And Eleazar the priest H413 unto the men of war which went
H559 H499 H3548 H582 H6635 H935

לְמִלְחָמָה הַזֹּאת תְּעַשׂ כְּזֹאת הַתּוֹךְ הַאֲשֶׁר צוֹה
to the battle H2063 This is the ordinance of the law commanded
H4421 H2708 H8451 H834 H6680

מֹשֶׁה: אַתָּה יְהִי הַזֹּאת
which the LORD H853 Moses
H3068 H4872