

Numbers 32:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

Analysis

For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people—Moses warns that turning away (shuv, שׁוּב) from following God would result in God abandoning (yanach, יָנַח) Israel in the wilderness again. The verb "turn away" is the same word used for repentance when it means turning toward God—here it depicts apostasy, turning from God.

The consequences extend beyond personal judgment to corporate destruction: "ye shall destroy all this people." Individual covenant-breaking endangers the entire community. God would abandon the nation again, repeating the wilderness judgment. This demonstrates covenant solidarity—Israel stood or fell together. One tribe's faithlessness could nullify God's purposes for all tribes, just as Achan's sin brought defeat at Ai (Joshua 7). Moses's warning underscores that covenant privileges carry covenant responsibilities affecting the whole body.

Historical Context

This warning proved prophetic in Israel's later history. The northern kingdom's apostasy under Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12) resulted in exile and destruction. Individual and tribal sins repeatedly brought national judgment. The principle of corporate covenant responsibility permeated Israel's theology—the community bore collective guilt for individual transgressions unless they dealt with sin

decisively. This explains the severity of commands to purge evil from Israel (Deuteronomy 13:5; 17:7).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the principle of corporate covenant responsibility challenge modern individualism?
2. In what ways can one believer's compromise threaten an entire church's spiritual health?
3. What does Moses's warning teach about the far-reaching consequences of turning away from God's purposes?

Interlinear Text

כ	וְ	תָשׁוּבָן	מֵאַחֲרֵי	יְהִי	רַבְנִים	וְעַד	לַפְנֵיכֶם
H3588	For if ye turn away	from after	him he will yet again	H5750	leave		
	H7725	H310	H3254		H3240		
בְּמִדְבָּר	וְשִׁתְּתָהּ	לְכָל	כָּלֵךְ	בְּזִיהָה			
them in the wilderness	and ye shall destroy	H3605	all this people	H2088			
H4057	H7843		H5971				

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 15:2 (Parallel theme): And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye

be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

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