

Numbers 35:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

Analysis

Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die (לִיָּד טַחֲזָ, keli ets-yad)—literally 'a wooden instrument of the hand,' referring to clubs, staffs, or other hand-wielded wooden implements capable of causing death. The trilateral repetition (iron-v.16, stone-v.17, wood-v.18) covers the three primary materials used for weapons in Bronze/Iron Age warfare.

The legal precision exhaustively categorizes murder scenarios, preventing clever evasion: 'I didn't use iron, merely wood.' God's law closes loopholes, demanding true justice. Yet for the accidental killer, the city of refuge remained open—law tempered with mercy.

Historical Context

Wooden weapons included olive-wood clubs (1 Samuel 17:40), oak staffs, and acacia rods. While less durable than metal, hardwoods like oak could easily crush a skull, making them deadly instruments when wielded with malicious force during the tribal period (1400-1050 BC).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why does the law meticulously catalog weapon types—what does this reveal about God's commitment to comprehensive justice?
2. How does the threefold repetition (iron, stone, wood) ensure no murderer escapes through technicalities?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵל	בְּכָל יָ	עֵץ	יָד	אֲשֶׁר	יּוֹמַת	בּוֹ	הֵכָהוּ
H176	weapon	of wood	him with an hand	H834	and he die	H0	Or if he smite
	H3627	H6086	H3027		H4191		H5221
יּוֹמַת	הָרָצָח:	הוּא	יּוֹמַת	יּוֹמַת	הָרָצָח:		
and he die	he is a murderer	H1931	and he die	and he die	he is a murderer		
H4191	H7523		H4191	H4191	H7523		

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