

# Numbers 35:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

## Analysis

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God prohibits: 'ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.' The Hebrew 'kofer' (satisfaction/ransom) means payment substituting for punishment. God forbade accepting money instead of executing murderers - human life's value demands ultimate penalty. This wasn't vengeance but justice protecting life's sanctity. The phrase 'guilty of death' (rasha lamut) indicates deserving capital punishment. This principle undergirds the gospel - our spiritual murder of God's image in ourselves demands death penalty. Yet Christ provides the only acceptable kofer (ransom), His life for ours (Matt 20:28, 1 Pet 1:18-19). No other payment suffices.

## Historical Context

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This law prevented wealthy murderers from avoiding justice through bribes - a common practice in ancient Near Eastern cultures. Israel's law uniquely prohibited monetary substitution for murder, emphasizing life's infinite value as God's image-bearers (Gen 9:6). Other crimes allowed restitution, but not murder. This maintained justice's integrity and prevented corruption. The law applied equally regardless of social status - even kings (David's adultery leading to murder) faced consequences. After exile without independent judiciary, Jewish law made capital punishment nearly impossible through stringent evidentiary requirements. Christian understanding sees this law highlighting that only Christ's blood, not silver or gold, ransoms from sin's death penalty.

