

Numbers 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.

Analysis

The phrase 'that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell' reveals the theological basis for excluding the unclean—God's presence among His people. His holiness requires corresponding holiness in the congregation. The camp's purity was not primarily about disease prevention but about maintaining proper reverence for God's dwelling among Israel. This anticipates the New Testament teaching that believers' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), requiring personal holiness.

Historical Context

God's dwelling among Israel via the tabernacle distinguished them from all nations. While other ancient peoples built temples as houses for their gods, Israel's God chose to journey with His people through the wilderness. This intimate presence brought both incredible privilege and serious responsibility—the congregation had to maintain standards befitting God's presence. The New Covenant fulfills this in greater measure as God dwells in believers individually and corporately.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How should God's presence among His people shape the church's standards for personal and corporate holiness?
2. What practical implications does the Holy Spirit's indwelling have for your daily life and choices?

Interlinear Text

מִצְרַיִם	עַד	נַקְבָּה	תִּשְׁלַח וּמָ	אֵל	מִחְזִיק	מִן
Both male	H5704	and female	shall ye put	H413	without	not their camps
H2145		H5347	H7971		H2351	H4264
אָנָּה וְאָשָׁר	תִּשְׁלַח וּמָ	וְלֹא יִטְמָא	אֵת	מִן	מִצְרַיִם	אֲשֶׁר
shall ye put	H3808	them that they defile	H853	not their camps	whereof	H589
H7971		H2930		H4264		H834
בְּתוּכְםָן שְׁכִים						
I dwell	in the midst					
H7931	H8432					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 23:14 (Parallel theme): For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.