

Numbers 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.

Analysis

This law requires confession and restitution when someone 'commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD.' The Hebrew 'yadah' (confess) means to acknowledge openly, while making full restitution plus twenty percent demonstrates genuine repentance bearing fruit. The phrase 'trespass against the LORD' shows that sins against people are ultimately sins against God (cf. Ps 51:4, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned'). This law requires both vertical reconciliation (confession to God) and horizontal reconciliation (restitution to the wronged party), foreshadowing Christ's teaching on reconciliation (Matt 5:23-24) and Zacchaeus's response to grace (Luke 19:8).

Historical Context

Given at Sinai as part of the Holiness Code, this law maintained community integrity. The twenty percent addition ensured victims weren't disadvantaged by theft and deterred future offenses. If the wronged party died without heirs, restitution went to the priests, acknowledging the offense against God's community. This law influenced later Jewish halakha (legal rulings) and demonstrates that Old Testament law emphasized restorative, not merely punitive, justice. True confession leads to tangible restitution, not mere words.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Is there anyone you've wronged who deserves not just apology but tangible restitution?
2. How does understanding all sin as ultimately against God deepen your repentance and fuel your reconciliation efforts?

Interlinear Text

<p>וְהִתְוַדּוּ Then they shall confess H3034</p>	<p>אֶת H853</p>	<p>חַטָּאתָם their sin H2403</p>	<p>אֲשֶׁר H834</p>	<p>עָשׂוּ which they have done H6213</p>
<p>וְהֵשִׁיב and he shall recompense H7725</p>	<p>אֶת H853</p>	<p>אֲשָׁמוֹ his trespass H817</p>	<p>בְּרֹאשׁוֹ with the principal H7218</p>	<p>וְחִמִּישָׁתוֹ unto it the fifth H2549</p>
<p>יָסֶף thereof and add H3254</p>	<p>עַל יוֹ H5921</p>	<p>וְנָתַן part thereof and give H5414</p>	<p>לְאֲשֶׁר H834</p>	
<p>אֲשֶׁר it unto him against whom he hath trespassed H816</p>		<p>לּוֹ: H0</p>		

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 5:5 (Sin): And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing:

Joshua 7:19 (Parallel theme): And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

Leviticus 26:40 (Sin): If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

Proverbs 28:13 (Sin): He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Luke 19:8 (Parallel theme): And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.