

Numbers 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.

Analysis

The provision that restitution go to the priest when the wronged party had no kinsman demonstrates God's concern that justice not be thwarted by technicalities. The Hebrew goel (kinsman-redeemer) normally received restitution, but if none existed, the priest represented God's claim. This establishes that all sin is ultimately against God, even when it directly harms neighbors. The priest receiving the restitution pictures Christ who, as our kinsman-redeemer, receives the satisfaction for sins committed against God and His people.

Historical Context

The kinsman-redeemer system provided social safety nets in ancient Israel, ensuring that widows, orphans, and the destitute had family advocates. If a wronged person died without family, his claim did not die with him—God remained the ultimate claimant of justice through His priestly representatives.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Christ as our kinsman-redeemer satisfy both justice and mercy?
2. What does it mean that all sin is ultimately against God, even when we wrong others?
3. How should the church ensure that justice is not forgotten even when human claimants are absent?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵשׁ מִן הַמְוֹשֵׁב
the trespass of the priest
H817 H7725 H817

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the trespass of the priest
H817 H7725 H817

מִלְבָד לְכַפֵּר אֶל יְהוָה
unto the LORD even to the priest
H3068 H3548 H905

בְּאֵשׁ מִן הַמְוֹשֵׁב
the trespass of the priest
H817 H7725 H834 H3722 H0

עַל־
H5921

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 7:7 (Parallel theme): As the sin offering is, so is the trespass offering: there is one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it.