

Numbers 9:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?

Analysis

The defiled men's question 'Wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season?' expresses genuine grief over exclusion from corporate worship. Their phrase 'kept back' (Hebrew gara—diminished/restrained) reveals they felt impoverished by missing the feast. This holy desire for participation led to divine accommodation. The principle emerges that God responds to sincere longing for His presence and ordinances. Their question also raises the theological issue of how purity laws relate to covenant participation, ultimately resolved in Christ who makes the unclean clean.

Historical Context

This incident demonstrates the living nature of God's law under Moses—when new circumstances arose, Moses inquired of the Lord for clarification (verse 8). This pattern appears repeatedly in Torah, showing that even Moses did not presume to legislate without divine instruction. The supplementary Passover in the second month (verses 10-11) became permanent law from this incident.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does genuine desire for God's ordinances distinguish true piety from mere duty?
2. What does God's responsiveness to sincere questions teach about His accessibility?
3. How should church leaders respond when circumstances create barriers to covenant participation?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמְרוּ said H559	הָאֵלֶּשׁ יִם H376	וְהֵם מָה And those H1992	אֵל יוֹ H413	אֲנִי חֲנוּ H587	טִמְאָ יִם unto him We are defiled H2931
לְנֶפֶשׁ by the dead body H5315	אֶדָם of a man H120	לְמָה H4100	נִגְבַּר עַ wherefore are we kept back H1639	לְבִלְתִּי H1115	
הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִב that we may not offer H7126	אֶת H853	קֹרְבָן an offering H7133	יְהוָה of the LORD H3068	בְּמִעְדּוֹ in his appointed season H4150	
בְּתוֹךְ among H8432	בְּנֵי יִ the children H1121	יִשְׂרָאֵל: of Israel H3478			