

Sticks and Stones (Numbers 15)

Introduction: *Forgiveness and consequences*

“It could be that the purpose of your life is to serve as a warning to others.”

1. A new hope: *Laws for offerings ‘when you come into the land.’ (v. 1-21)*

One day soon, their children will have an abundance of flour, oil, and wine to join with their offerings.

2. Sins of ignorance: *What’s the difference in a ‘high handed sin?’ (v. 22-31)*

Compare the “unintentional” or “accidental” sins of Leviticus 6, including theft, extortion, and swearing falsely. This speaks of the one who has “despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment” (Num 15:31).

Sins of ignorance are “perfectly conscious and voluntary, but they are capable of being redeemed” (Jacob).

“Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because *I did it ignorantly* in unbelief” (1Ti 1:13).

Yet the application of the “death sentence” in Israel is superseded by the “hell sentence” in the NT, as being “cut off” is applied. “Deliver such a one to Satan ... Therefore ‘put away from yourselves the evil person’” (1Co 5:5, 13).

“Whatever your sin be, yet if you be grieved for it, and would be content to have mercy through Christ, or desire the application of his redemption, you are not guilty of this sin” (Thomas Boston, *Works*, 1.538).

3. The Sabbath broken with a high hand: *Why such a punishment? (v. 32-36)*

This offense was made capital in Exod 31:14 and 35:2. Consider if these laws are harsh now, how they must have been harsh then.

Compare John Cotton, *Abstract of the Laws of New England*: “Profaning of the Lord's day, in a careless and scornful neglect or contempt thereof, to be punished with death” (7.11).

4. Reminders of holiness: *Take care to be holy (v. 37-41)*

“Prevention is better than [a] cure” (Wenham, 132). Jesus himself wears fringe on borders of his garments (Matt 9:20).

NT Application: *“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (Heb 10:26-31).*

“Contempt for the Gospel is in itself more heinous than a contempt of the Law” (Charles Simeon).