

## **Num. 15:22-31 (CD 1:13) “Assurance Or Presumption?”**

**For the Children:** Some people are very confident that they are good at doing certain things, but are in fact very bad at those things. Sometimes such people boast about their skills and boldly predict that they will get the best results. But just because they are wrong, that doesn't mean none of us can be confident about anything. A child can still be confident that his parents love him and will protect him. Some trust themselves to earn God's love. They are mistaken. But His true children rightly trust Him to save and protect them. **Questions:** How do we know God will keep His children safe? Does going to church guarantee you will be right with the Lord? Is there any sin God won't forgive – and if so, what is it?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: Assurance for Sinners**

- 1) Individuals, Aliens & All: What the Lord has to say about sin, judgement and atonement applies to all Israel – the individual, the congregation as a whole, even the aliens sojourning with them
- 2) Unintentional Sins: Like Lev. 4, Num. 15 deals with unintentional sins – a problem that affects the way we respond to all of God's commandments, from the time of Moses on. Both individuals and the whole congregation are capable of sinning in this way. See 1 Cor. 5 on collective sinning. Congregational sinning can occur where there are commonly held errors, ignorance, “blind spots,” hasty decisions, or leaders who assure everyone that the sin is not really against God's Word
- 3) Serious Consequences: All sin is transgression against God's Law, even unintentional sins and those we see as “minor.” They all deserve the death penalty, and therefore all need atonement (vss. 25, 28). We tend to take unintentional, and sometimes intentional sins far too lightly
- 4) Atonement & Forgiveness: “Atonement” is the removal of sin by a ransom, offered as a substitute for the sinner. The result of atonement is that God forgives the sinner. In the OT, this was accomplished through animal sacrifices
- 5) The Ultimate Basis: The animal sacrifices pointed to Christ, whose work made the OT system effectual when it was used in faith. God graciously provided the ultimate Ransom/ Substitute. He also graciously provided the faith, rather than allowing automatic atonement by the mere outward rite of sacrificing. That some received that gift, not all, implies election – God's choice as to who would receive faith. Those who used the system in faith could be assured of atonement because God promised it. We can be even more sure, because we know these promises are ratified by Christ's blood

#### **Second Point: No Assurance for Defiant Sinners**

- 1) The Sin of the High Hand: There was no sacrifice for those who sinned intentionally, defiantly, lit. with a “high hand,” This is not talking about intentional sins of which the sinner later repented (Lev. 6:1-6). The intentional sin in view in Num. 15:30-31 is a settled, ongoing rebellion against God, with no repentance. See 1 Jn. 5:16-17. It involves reviling Yahweh, despising His Word & covenant, breaking His laws, and regarding Him as irrelevant
- 2) Even More Serious Consequences: For those who sin in this way, there is no sacrifice, no atonement and no forgiveness. Their guilt remains on them. They are liable to God's judgement, as we see in Num. 14 & 16. They must be completely cut off from the covenant-community (put to death in the OT, excommunicated in the NT)
- 3) No Presumption: This response to the sin of the high hand shows that there can be no presumption that being a member of the covenant community automatically makes one elect or saved. If there is no atonement, it is because there is no faith, and no certainty of election for that person. If one is elect, he will in due time humble himself before the Lord, struggle against sin, gratefully strive to lead a holy life, and enjoy assurance that God preserves His elect. If one is not elect, we expect to see defiance of God, disobedience without repentance, and/or *carnal* security

**Conclusion:**