

Deuteronomy 10:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow,
and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

Analysis

He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow—The Hebrew mishpat (judgment/justice) emphasizes God actively intervenes to defend society's most vulnerable. In ancient Near East, orphans and widows lacked legal advocates and property rights, making them economically defenseless. God Himself becomes their go'el (redeemer/defender).

Loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment—Ger (stranger/sojourner) refers to foreign residents without tribal inheritance rights. God's love manifests practically through provision. This verse grounds the greatest commandment: because God loves impartially, His people must (v. 19). James 1:27 defines 'pure religion' as caring for orphans and widows. Jesus's sheep-and-goats judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) makes serving 'the least' the test of genuine faith. God's character defines righteousness.

Historical Context

Moses established a theocratic legal system where God's character defined justice. In surrounding pagan cultures, power determined justice; Yahweh reversed this, positioning Himself as advocate for the powerless. This revolutionary ethic distinguished Israel's covenant community.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Who are the 'fatherless, widow, and stranger' equivalents in your community that God calls you to defend?
2. How does God's practical provision for the vulnerable challenge comfortable Christianity that emphasizes spiritual blessings while ignoring physical needs?

Interlinear Text

עֲשֵׂה	מִשְׁפָּט	וְיִתְּמַרֵּן	וְאֶלְמָנָה	וְאֶחָד
He doth execute	the judgment	of the fatherless	and widow	and loveth
H6213	H4941	H3490	H490	H157
גֵּר	לִתְּתָה	לִכְמָד	וְשִׁמְלָה:	
the stranger	in giving	him food	and raiment	
H1616	H5414	H3899	H8071	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 146:9 (Parallel theme): The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

Psalms 68:5 (Judgment): A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

Isaiah 1:17 (Judgment): Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Jeremiah 49:11 (Parallel theme): Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

Psalms 103:6 (Judgment): The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

Psalms 145:9 (Parallel theme): The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Exodus 22:22 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.

Hosea 14:3 (Parallel theme): Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.