

Deuteronomy 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

Analysis

These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

This verse introduces the legal corpus (chapters 12-26) known as the Deuteronomic Code. The phrase 'statutes and judgments' (chuqqim u-mishpatim, חקִים וְמִשְׁפָטִים) encompasses the full range of covenant stipulations—both ceremonial and civil law. The temporal scope 'all the days that ye live upon the earth' emphasizes permanent obligation. These aren't temporary regulations but enduring covenant requirements for life in the promised land. The foundation: 'the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee'—the laws are inseparable from the land gift, both flowing from covenant relationship.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi's Code, Hittite Laws) were typically organized as case law (casuistic: 'if...then'). Deuteronomy's structure combines case law with direct commands (apodictic: 'you shall/shall not'), reflecting covenant treaty format. The laws addressed Israel's transition from nomadic to settled agricultural life. Moses, about to die, leaves this legal legacy to govern Israel's national life under Joshua and beyond.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do God's laws for His people flow from His gracious covenant relationship rather than arbitrary demands?
2. What does 'all the days that ye live upon the earth' teach about the comprehensive nature of Christian obedience?
3. How do we discern which Old Testament civil and ceremonial laws continue to apply to New Testament believers?

Interlinear Text

אַל	לֹה	יְמִינְךָ	בְּחִקָּת	אֲשֶׁר	וּבְמִשְׁפָטִים	תָּשִׁמְרֶר	וְלֹ
H428	These are the statutes	H2706		H834	and judgments	H8104	which ye shall observe
				H4941			
לְעַשׂ	זֶה	בְּאַ	אֲשֶׁר	נָתַן	יְהִי	אֱלֹהִים	אֱבֹתֶת
to do	in the land	H834	giveth	H3068	which the LORD	H430	of thy fathers
H6213	H776		H5414			H1	
לְבָ	לְרִשְׁתְּ	הַ	כֹּל	בְּמִימְמָ	אֲשֶׁר	מִיּוֹם	עַל
thee to possess	it all the days	H3605	H3117	H834	H859	H2416	H5921
H0							
בָּאָדָם							
upon the earth							
H127							

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 8:40 (Parallel theme): That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

Job 7:1 (Parallel theme): Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

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