

# Deuteronomy 16:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

## Analysis

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**And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt**—The Hebrew vezacharta (וְזִכְּרָתָ) commands active remembrance, not passive recollection. Israel's slavery experience (אַתֶּן עָבֵד הָיָיתָ, eved hayita, 'you were a slave') must shape present ethics. This motive clause grounds inclusive feast hospitality in experiential solidarity: 'You know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers' (Exodus 23:9).

**Thou shalt observe and do these statutes**—The twin verbs veshamarta ve'asita (וְשִׁמְרָתָ וְעָשָׂתָ, 'guard and do') stress careful obedience. Memory of redemption demands ethical action. This verse links Egypt's memory directly to feast inclusion (v. 11), making compassion for the marginalized a redemption-driven obligation. Christians similarly root ethics in Christ's redemption: 'Be kind...forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you' (Ephesians 4:32).

## Historical Context

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Egypt's bondage (circa 1876-1446 BC per conservative dating) defined Israel's identity. The Exodus was God's paradigmatic redemptive act, referenced throughout Torah to motivate obedience. The command to remember slavery appears repeatedly (5:15, 15:15, 24:18, 24:22), especially regarding treatment of servants, strangers, and the poor. Remembering oppression cultivates empathy and prevents Israel from oppressing others. This principle of redemption-shaped ethics permeates Scripture.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How should remembering your own spiritual slavery (to sin) before redemption shape how you treat others?
2. In what ways does God's past deliverance serve as both motivation and pattern for present obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּמִצְבָּה יְהֹוָה	בְּיַהְוָה	עַל־בָּדָם	כִּי־יָתַר	כִּי־כָּרְפָּתָה	וְיִשְׁמְרָתָה
<b>And thou shalt remember</b>	H3588	<b>that thou wast a bondman</b>	H1961	<b>in Egypt</b>	H4714
H2142		H5650		H2142	

  

בְּאֶלְהָהָן	בְּמִצְבָּה	עַל־יְהֹוָה	אַתָּה	וְיִשְׁמְרָתָה	וְיִשְׁמְרָתָה
<b>and thou shalt observe</b>		<b>and do</b>	H853	<b>these statutes</b>	H428
H8104		H6213		H2706	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 15:15** (References Egypt): And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.