

Deuteronomy 16:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Analysis

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow (תְּשַׁעַר תְּשִׁעַר תְּשִׁעַר, tsedeq tsedeq tirdof)—The Hebrew doubling intensifies: 'Justice, justice you shall pursue!' This emphatic repetition demands relentless commitment to tsedeq (righteousness, justice). The verb **follow** (רָאַד, radaf, 'pursue, chase, persecute') implies aggressive pursuit, not passive waiting. Justice doesn't happen accidentally but requires active, vigorous pursuit.

That thou mayest live, and inherit the land—National survival depends on justice. Amos warned: **Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream** (Amos 5:24), else **Seek ye the LORD, and ye shall live** (Amos 5:6) becomes **there shall be wailing in all streets** (Amos 5:16). Jesus embodied perfect justice, bringing **judgment unto victory** (Matthew 12:20), and commands His followers: **Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness** (Matthew 6:33).

Historical Context

Moses spoke this before Israel's Canaan entry (1406 BC). The Canaanites practiced judicial corruption, bribery, and cultic prostitution. God's command for pure justice distinguished Israel morally, ensuring social stability. Prophets later condemned Israel for abandoning this standard (Isaiah 1:21-23, Jeremiah 5:28, Micah 3:9-11).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What injustices (systemic oppression, personal unfairness, turning blind eye to wrong) must you 'aggressively pursue' correcting?
2. How does Jesus's perfect justice (defending the weak, confronting the powerful) model your pursuit of righteousness?
3. In what areas are you passively tolerating injustice rather than actively 'chasing' what's right?

Interlinear Text

לְמַעַן

That which is altogether

H6664

לְמַעַן

That which is altogether

H6664

תְּרַדֵּךְ

shalt thou follow

H4616

לְמַעַן

H4616

תְּחִיָּה

that thou mayest live

H2421

וְיִרְשֶׁתֶת

and inherit

H3423

אַתָּה

H853

בְּאַרְצָה

the land

H776

אֲשֶׁר

H834

יְהִי הָ

which the LORD

H3068

לְבָנָה נָתַת | אֱלֹהִים יְבָנָה

thy God

giveth

H0

H430

H5414

Additional Cross-References

Micah 6:8 (Righteousness): He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

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