

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 (תִּשְׁדֵּק תִּשְׁדֵּק, tse²deq tse²deq tirdof)—The Hebrew doubling intensifies: 'Justice, justice you shall pursue!' This emphatic repetition demands relentless commitment to tse²deq (righteousness, justice). The verb **follow** (רָדַף, 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

Psalms 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

כָּדֹק	כָּדֹק	תִּדְבֹדָךְ	לִמְעַן
That which is altogether	That which is altogether	shalt thou follow	H4616
H6664	H6664	H7291	
תִּחְיֶה	וְיָרַשְׁתָּ	אֶת	הָאָרֶץ
that thou mayest live	and inherit	H853	the land
H2421	H3423	H776	H834
אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה		
	which the LORD		
	H3068		
לְךָ	נִתֵּן	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	
		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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