

Deuteronomy 19:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.

Analysis

Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither. Infrastructure supporting mercy required intentional preparation - roads to refuge cities must be maintained and clearly marked. God commands not just mercy in principle but practical provision enabling its access.

The command prepare thee a way indicates active responsibility to make refuge accessible. Unused mercy is useless mercy - compassion requires creating paths that enable its exercise. Israel must build and maintain roads facilitating flight to safety.

Dividing into three parts ensured comprehensive coverage - no region lacked nearby refuge. This demonstrates God's concern for equitable access to justice and mercy throughout the land, not concentrated in one privileged area.

The phrase that every slayer may flee emphasizes universal availability. Refugee protection was not selective favor but provided equally to all who needed it, regardless of tribe or region.

Historical Context

Jewish tradition records that roads to cities of refuge were well-maintained, marked with signs reading 'refuge,' and kept wide enough for easy travel. This practical infrastructure enabled the law's merciful intent.

Neglecting this infrastructure would have rendered the refuge provision meaningless - mercy must be accessible to be effective.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the command to build refuge roads teach about practical expressions of mercy?
2. How does maintaining infrastructure for justice demonstrate that compassion requires action?
3. Why is equitable access to mercy important rather than concentrating it in select locations?
4. What modern parallels exist to making mercy and justice accessible through practical infrastructure?
5. How does universal availability of refuge reflect God's impartial provision of mercy?

Interlinear Text

תָּכִן יוֹ	לָב	הַדֶּרֶךְ	וְשִׁלְשָׁתָּ	אֶת	גֹּב וּלְ
Thou shalt prepare	H0	thee a way	into three parts	H853	and divide the coasts
H3559		H1870	H8027		H1366
אֶרְצְךָ	אֵשׁ רַ	יִנְחִילָבְּ	יְהוָה הַ	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	יְהוָה הַ
of thy land	H834	giveth thee to inherit	which the LORD	thy God	H1961
H776		H5157	H3068	H430	
לָנ וּסִ	שׁ מָה	כָּל	רֹצֵחַ:		
may flee	H8033	H3605	that every slayer		
H5127			H7523		

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