

Deuteronomy 21:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.

Analysis

And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. The explicit declaration our hands have not shed this blood addresses potential direct involvement. The elders declare that neither they nor their city's citizens committed the murder knowingly.

The addition neither have our eyes seen it extends the declaration to knowledge and witness. They testify that they have no information about the murder - neither perpetrated it nor witnessed it nor concealed knowledge of it.

This twofold declaration covers both commission and knowledge, protecting the community from guilt by direct action or guilty knowledge. Innocence requires not merely not doing evil but not knowing and concealing it.

The public, official nature of this declaration creates accountability. False declaration would bring guilt upon the community. This oath-like statement invokes divine witness that they speak truth.

Historical Context

Public declarations by community leaders carried legal and religious weight in ancient Israel. Elders represented the city corporately, and their word stood for the entire community's testimony.

False declaration would constitute perjury before God and humans, bringing judgment rather than cleansing.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 – God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why is innocence defined as both not doing evil and not concealing knowledge of it?
2. What does public official declaration teach about corporate accountability?
3. How does invoking divine witness create accountability for truthfulness?
4. What distinguishes genuine innocence from mere ritual protestation?
5. Why must communities publicly declare their efforts to prevent and address evil?

Interlinear Text

וְעַנְתָּ	וְאָמַרְתָּ	לֵדָה	לְאַדְתָּךְ	שְׁפָכָה	מִתְמַמָּתָךְ
And they shall answer	and say	Our hands	H3808	have not shed	H853

בָּזֶה	בְּעֵינֵינוּ	לְאָאוּ
H2088	neither have our eyes	H3808