

Deuteronomy 22:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.

Analysis

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. This law requires active responsibility for neighbors' property. Indifference to others' loss violates covenant community obligations - believers must actively help preserve what belongs to their brothers.

The phrase hide thyself from them condemns willful blindness to neighbors' need. Pretending not to notice straying livestock to avoid inconvenience is prohibited. Covenant love requires engagement, not studied indifference to others' problems.

The command in any case bring them again mandates positive action beyond merely not stealing. Believers must actively restore what is lost, even at personal cost and inconvenience. Love of neighbor requires sacrifice, not mere non-interference.

Jesus later teaches that the second great commandment - love thy neighbor as thyself - summarizes such laws. We should care for neighbors' possessions as we would want them to care for ours.

Historical Context

In agricultural society, straying livestock represented significant economic loss. Animals could be injured, stolen by others, or lost permanently. Returning them preserved the neighbor's livelihood and demonstrated covenant faithfulness.

This contrasts with pagan societies where finding lost property often meant keeping it as providence or fortune.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does prohibition against hiding yourself teach about active responsibility for neighbors?
2. How does willful blindness to others' needs violate covenant love?
3. Why must love of neighbor involve positive action beyond mere non-interference?
4. How does this law illustrate Jesus' teaching to love neighbor as yourself?
5. What modern applications exist for actively restoring others' losses?

Interlinear Text

לֹא תִרְאָה תְּרֵא אֶת שׂוֹר אֶת שִׁוְןָא
H3808 Thou shalt not see H853 ox H176 thy brother's H853 or his sheep
H7200 H7794 H251 H7716

מִמֶּנּוּ וְתִשְׁלַח יָמָם
H1992 bring them again H7725
go astray and hide H5956 H7725 bring them again

לְאֶחָיוֹן
thy brother's
H251

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 58:7 (Parallel theme): Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Proverbs 24:11 (Parallel theme): If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;

Ezekiel 34:16 (Parallel theme): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.