

Deuteronomy 24:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Analysis

When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward—extending the gleaning principle from grain (24:19) and olives (24:20) to viticulture. The prohibition *lo te'olel acharekha* (לֹא תַעֲוִיל אַחֲרֶיךָ) means 'you shall not glean after yourself.' Initial harvest took ripe grape clusters; remaining grapes were for **the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow**.

Vineyards represented significant investment—land clearing, vine planting, years waiting for productivity. Yet God commanded landowners to intentionally harvest inefficiently, leaving portions for the vulnerable. This required faith that God's blessing on nine-tenths exceeded human grasping for ten-tenths. The principle appears in Jesus's teaching: 'Give, and it will be given to you' (Luke 6:38).

Historical Context

Delivered circa 1406 BC as preparation for settled life in Canaan. Grape cultivation was central to Israelite agriculture—providing fresh fruit, raisins, and wine for daily consumption, celebration, and religious offerings. The vintage season (September-October) was joyous but labor-intensive. The law balanced landowners' legitimate profit with communal responsibility, reflecting God's ownership of the land: 'The land is Mine' (Leviticus 25:23).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does intentionally 'inefficient' obedience demonstrate trust that God's blessing exceeds human scheming?
2. What would 'gleaning laws' look like in your business, budget, or time management?
3. How does this law reveal that God's economic vision prioritizes people over profit maximization?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תִבְצֹר	כַּרְמְךָ	לֹא	תַעֲוֹל ל	
H3588	When thou gatherest	the grapes of thy vineyard	H3808	thou shalt not glean	
	H1219	H3754		H5953	
אַחֲרָיָה	לִגְר	לִיתָ וְ	וְלֹא־לְמָנָה	יְהִיָּה:	
it afterward	it shall be for the stranger	for the fatherless	and for the widow		H1961
H310	H1616	H3490	H490		

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