

Deuteronomy 24:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Analysis

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt—the motivational refrain throughout Deuteronomy (5:15, 15:15, 16:12), grounding ethics in salvation history. Israel's own experience of poverty, powerlessness, and oppression in Egyptian slavery should produce empathy and generosity toward vulnerable populations. God's redemptive act obligated redeemed people to reflect His character by caring for the marginalized.

Therefore I command thee to do this thing—gleaning laws weren't suggestions but divine commands, enforceable requirements. Compassion was legislated, not left to individual benevolence. This prophylactic against greed recognized human selfishness, creating structural protections for the poor. The principle appears in 1 John 3:17: 'If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?'

Historical Context

Spoken circa 1406 BC to the wilderness generation born in freedom, who never experienced Egyptian bondage personally. Moses constantly reminded them of their parents' slavery to instill generational memory and covenant identity. Israel's slavery lasted approximately 400 years (Genesis 15:13), ending with the Exodus circa 1446 BC. The memory was to shape national character permanently—former slaves must never become oppressors.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How should remembering your own 'Egypt'—times of need, oppression, or God's deliverance—motivate compassion?
2. Why does God command generosity rather than merely suggesting it? What does this reveal about human nature?
3. How does Christ's redemption create obligation to care for the vulnerable, as Israel's Exodus did?

Interlinear Text

וְזָכַרְתָּ	כִּי	עָבָדְתָּ	הִיא יְתָ	בְּאֶרֶץ
And thou shalt remember	H3588	that thou wast a bondman	H1961	in the land
H2142		H5650		H776
מִמִּצְרַיִם	עַל	אֲנִי יְיָ	מִצְרַיִם	לַעֲשׂוֹת
of Egypt	H5921	H3651	H595	therefore I command
H4714			H6680	thee to do
				H6213
				H853
				this thing
				H1697
הַזֶּה:				
H2088				

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 24:18 (References Egypt): But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

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