

Deuteronomy 25:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.

Analysis

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small—prohibiting dishonest merchants who carried two sets of weights: heavy ones for buying (getting more goods for payment) and light ones for selling (giving less goods for payment). The Hebrew even va-even (אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן, 'stone and stone') refers to stone weights used with balance scales. Having multiple weights enabled fraud, cheating customers and suppliers alike.

This continues Leviticus 19:35-36 and appears again in Proverbs 11:1, 16:11, 20:10, 23. Weights and measures were fundamental to commerce—grain, oil, wine, and precious metals all sold by weight. Fraud corrupted the marketplace and violated the justice God demanded. The law required one accurate standard for all transactions, reflecting God's own unchanging righteousness as the standard for His people.

Historical Context

Given circa 1406 BC before Israel engaged in agricultural and commercial economy in Canaan. Ancient markets lacked standardized regulation; merchants supplied their own weights and measures. This invited abuse, especially against illiterate peasants who couldn't verify accuracy. Archaeological discoveries of ancient weights show significant variation, suggesting fraud was indeed common. Israel's law demanded commercial honesty as religious obligation, unlike pagan cultures separating marketplace ethics from religion.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do dishonest business practices violate God's character and damage society's trust?
2. What modern equivalents exist to 'diverse weights'—deceptive practices in commerce or communication?
3. How should Christians ensure integrity in business dealings, contracts, and financial representations?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	יְהוָה	לְךָ	בְּכִסֵּךְ	וְאֶבֶן	וְאֶבֶן
H3808	H1961	H0	H3599	H68	H68
			Thou shalt not have in thy bag	divers weights	divers weights
וְקִטְנָה:	גְּדוֹלָה				
H6996	H1419				
and a small	a great				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 11:1 (Parallel theme): A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

Proverbs 16:11 (Parallel theme): A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work.

Amos 8:5 (Parallel theme): Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

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