

Deuteronomy 25:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.

Analysis

Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small—extending the prohibition from portable weights (bag) to household measures (containers for dry goods). The Hebrew ephah ve-ephah (אֱפָה וְאֱפָה) literally means 'ephah and ephah,' referring to the standard dry measure (about 22 liters). Like the bag of diverse weights, multiple measures enabled fraud—large measures for receiving payment, small ones for delivering goods.

The home reference indicates many Israelites would operate small-scale businesses from their residences—baking, brewing, weaving, oil-pressing. The law reached into private enterprise, making commercial honesty a household obligation, not merely public marketplace standard. Proverbs 20:10 condemns both 'diverse weights and diverse measures,' calling them 'abomination to the LORD'—strong language equating fraud with idolatry and sexual immorality.

Historical Context

Spoken circa 1406 BC in preparation for settled economic life. The ephah (dry measure) and bath (liquid measure) were standard units, though regional variation existed. Without central authority standardizing measures, integrity depended on individual conscience and community enforcement. Israel's law made God the standard-setter and judge of commercial ethics, a radical concept in ancient markets where caveat emptor ruled and deities rarely concerned themselves with weights and measures.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why does God care about weights and measures? How does commercial fraud connect to spiritual faithfulness?
2. What 'divers measures' might Christians be tempted to use—different standards for themselves versus others?
3. How does marketplace integrity witness to God's character in unbelieving communities?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵין	הַ	לֹא	לְבָ	בְּבִתְחָ	וְאֵין	הַ
H3808	H1961	H0	Thou shalt not have in thine house	H1004	divers measures	H374
divers measures	a great	and a small				
H374	H1419	H6996				

וְאֵין	הַ	גְּדוֹלָה	וְאֵין	הַ	מִזְרְעָה	וְאֵין
divers measures	a great	and a small				
H374	H1419	H6996				

וְאֵין	הַ	לֹא	לְבָ	בְּבִתְחָ	וְאֵין	הַ
H3808	H1961	H0	Thou shalt not have in thine house	H1004	divers measures	H374
divers measures	a great	and a small				
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