

Deuteronomy 26:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

Analysis

I have not eaten thereof in my mourning—the tithe wasn't consumed during ritual uncleanness associated with mourning the dead (contact with corpses caused temporary uncleanness, Numbers 19:11-22). **Neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use**—no portion was diverted to profane purposes or handled in ceremonially unclean states. **Nor given ought thereof for the dead**—prohibiting use of the tithe in pagan funeral customs or offerings to the deceased, practices common in surrounding cultures but forbidden to Israel.

These three negative declarations protected the tithe's sacred character. The prohibition on eating while mourning and giving for the dead distinguished Israelite practices from pagan death cults that venerated ancestors and made offerings to spirits. **But I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me**—the positive conclusion affirmed complete obedience to all tithing regulations. Holiness required both avoiding prohibited actions and performing required ones.

Historical Context

Given circa 1406 BC before Israel encountered Canaanite religious practices that heavily emphasized death cults and ancestor veneration. Archaeological evidence from Canaan shows elaborate tomb offerings and apparent belief in feeding the dead. Israel's law explicitly rejected these practices, requiring the living to care for the living (Levites, poor) rather than making offerings to the dead. The prohibition safeguarded monotheistic worship and distinguished Israel from necromantic paganism.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why does God prohibit using sacred resources for death-related practices?
What theological truth does this protect?
2. How do modern 'offerings to the dead' (elaborate funerals while neglecting the living poor) violate this principle?
3. What's the relationship between ceremonial cleanliness in the Old Testament and moral purity for Christians?

Interlinear Text

לֹא בָּנָן אֲכָלָתִי

H3808 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning

H398

H205

לֹא מִתְּמַנֵּא

H3808

בְּעֵדֶת

neither have I taken away

H1197

מִתְּמַנֵּא

H4480

בְּטַמֵּא

ought thereof for any unclean

H2931

לֹא

H3808

בְּנֵתִי מִתְּמַנֵּא

use nor given

H4480

לֹמֶת

ought thereof for the dead

H4191

שְׁמָמָעִתִּי

but I have hearkened

H8085

בְּקוֹל

to the voice

H6963

אֲשֶׁר כִּכְלָל עֲשֵׂיתִי אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה

of the LORD my God and have done

H3068

H430

H6213

H3605

H834

אֲזִתָּנוּ

according to all that thou hast commanded

H6680

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 7:20 (References Lord): But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that pertain unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

Leviticus 21:1 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

Leviticus 21:11 (Parallel theme): Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;

Hosea 9:4 (References Lord): They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the

bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD.

Psalms 106:28 (Parallel theme): They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

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