

Deuteronomy 6:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

Analysis

The anticipated question 'What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments?' establishes the pattern of catechizing children. When children ask about covenant practices, parents must explain redemptive history and covenant obligations. The phrase 'which the LORD our God hath commanded you' indicates that younger generations require instruction in divine authority grounding obedience. This verse articulates the Reformed principle of covenant education: parents must intentionally disciple children, explaining God's Word and works. Faith transmission across generations requires deliberate teaching, not passive cultural osmosis.

Historical Context

Israel's festivals, Sabbaths, dietary laws, and Passover rituals naturally provoked children's questions about their meaning and purpose. These practices served as catechetical opportunities for rehearsing exodus redemption and covenant obligations. The Passover liturgy specifically included children's questions prompting parental explanation (Exodus 12:26-27). This generational teaching pattern sustained Israel's faith across centuries, preserving true worship even during apostasy periods. Faithful parents always maintained the remnant.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse establish parental responsibility for deliberately instructing children in Scripture and redemptive history?
2. What practices can Christian families implement to create regular opportunities for teaching children about God's Word and works?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	אִשְׁאֲלֶךָ	בְּנֶךָ	מְחֵר	לֵאמֹר	מָה
H3588	asketh	And when thy son	thee in time to come	saying	H4100
	H7592	H1121	H4279	H559	
	הֵעֵדָה	וְהַחֲקִים	וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֲשֶׁר	
	What mean the testimonies	and the statutes	and the judgments		H834
	H5713	H2706	H4941		
	צִוָּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	אֲתֶכֶם:	
	hath commanded	which the LORD	our God		H853
	H6680	H3068	H430		

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 13:14 (References Lord): And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:

Exodus 12:26 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

