

Exodus 12:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

Analysis

The anticipated question 'What mean ye by this service?' recognizes that rituals provoke curiosity, especially from children. The question creates a teaching moment where liturgy becomes catechesis. God designs ceremonies to be pedagogical—actions that demand explanation, ensuring the story is told. This principle underlies all Christian sacraments, which are enacted proclamations inviting inquiry.

Historical Context

Jewish practice developed this into formal questions during the Passover seder. The youngest child traditionally asks the 'Four Questions,' prompting the retelling of the exodus story.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do your spiritual practices create opportunities to explain the gospel to your children or others?

2. What visible actions in your life would cause someone to ask, 'Why do you do this?'

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה	כִּי	יֹאמְרוּ	אֵלֶיךָ	בְּנֵי־
H1961	H3588		H413	
		shall say		And it shall come to pass when your children
		H559		H1121
מֶה		הַעֲבֹדָה	הִזֵּאת	לָכֶם:
H4100			H2063	H0
		unto you What mean ye by this service		
		H5656		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:7 (Parallel theme): Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Psalms 145:4 (Parallel theme): One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.