

Exodus 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

Analysis

And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? (וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁנִי וְהִנֵּה שְׁנִי־אֲנָשִׁים עֲבָרִים נָצִים) —The second day marks continued involvement despite yesterday's violence. **Two men of the Hebrews strove together** (נָצִים, nitsim, "quarreling/fighting")—now the conflict is internal, Hebrew against Hebrew. Moses attempts to mediate: **Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?** (לֹמַה תִּפְעַל רַעַב) (lamah tip'ele re'ekha). The irony: Moses who killed yesterday now preaches peace. The aggressor's response (v. 14) reveals Moses' secret is known, showing the impossibility of hiding sin and Moses' rejection by his own people.

Historical Context

Internal conflict among the oppressed is common under tyranny—suffering doesn't automatically produce solidarity. That Hebrews knew of Moses' killing indicates either witnesses or rapid spread of information. Moses' failed attempt to mediate previews his future successful mediation between God and Israel (32:11-14, 30-32).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the Hebrews' internal strife illustrate that oppression doesn't automatically create unity or righteousness?
2. What does Moses' rejected mediation teach about preparation needed before God can use someone as deliverer?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא	וְיֻמָּת	בַּיּוֹם	וְיִהְיֶה	בַּיּוֹם	וְיִרְאֶה	וְיִרְאֶה	וְיִרְאֶה	וְיִרְאֶה
And when he went out	day	the second	H2009	behold two			H376	
H3318	H3117	H8145		H8147				
עֲבָרִים	נִצְיָם	וְיִאמֶר	לְבָשׂ ע	לְפָנָה	לְבָשׂ ע	לְפָנָה		
of the Hebrews	strove	together and he said	to him that did the wrong				H4100	
H5680	H5327	H559	H7563					
רָעָב	תִּנְאַכֵּל							
Wherefore smitest	thou thy fellow							
H5221	H7453							