

Exodus 22:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Analysis

And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

God's special concern for society's vulnerable appears throughout Scripture. The poor (אֶבֶיךָ, evyon), widows (אֱלֹנֶתֶת, almanah), and strangers (גֵּר, ger) lacked powerful advocates—so God becomes their defender. These laws protect against economic exploitation, demanding compassion rather than merely permitting it. Israel's own Egyptian oppression should create empathy for the marginalized. James defines pure religion as caring for widows and orphans (James 1:27); the early church prioritized these groups.

Historical Context

Widows, orphans, and foreigners in ancient societies often faced destitution without male protection. Israel's laws mandated care for these groups, making compassion a covenant obligation rather than optional charity.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this law reveal God's character—His justice, mercy, or holiness?
2. What New Testament principles build upon or fulfill this Old Testament regulation?

Interlinear Text

בָּעֵד וְבָעֵד אַתָּה מִזְבְּחָתִים אֶת־עָמָקָתֶךָ
shall wax hot And my wrath and I will kill you with the sword

H2734 H639 H2026 H853 H1961 H2719

בְּנֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־בְּנֵיכֶם וְתַּחֲנִמִּים
and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless

H802 H490 H1121 H3490

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 109:9 (Parallel theme): Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

Jeremiah 15:8 (Parallel theme): Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

Psalms 69:24 (Judgment): Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Lamentations 5:3 (Parallel theme): We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.