

Exodus 23:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

Analysis

Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

This command shapes Israel's covenant community life, applying moral law to social relationships. God's justice concerns everyday matters—truthfulness, fairness, compassion. The accumulation of ordinances creates comprehensive ethic governing Israelite society. These aren't arbitrary rules but revelations of God's character. He is just, merciful, truthful; His people must reflect these attributes. New Testament ethics build on this foundation, radicalizing commands while maintaining their spirit.

Historical Context

The Book of the Covenant concludes with liturgical calendar and worship regulations, integrating Israel's civil, moral, and ceremonial life under God's comprehensive rule.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

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

וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁתַּחַתְּנָה הָעֲשָׂה מֵאֱלֹהִים וְאַתָּה לֹא תַּעֲבֹד מֵאֱלֹהִים
H3808 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods H3808 nor serve H3808
H7812 H430 H5647

וְאַתָּה תְּמַעַשׂ הַמְּעַשִׂים מִבְּרִיתְךָ מְבָרֵךְ רָאשְׁךָ מְבָרֵךְ רָאשְׁךָ
H6213 them nor do H4639 after their works H3588 but thou shalt utterly H2040 but thou shalt utterly H2040
H2040

תִּשְׁבַּב רַמְּבָתִים: מִבְּרִיתְךָ תִּשְׁבַּב רַמְּבָתִים:
break down break down their images
H7665 H7665 H4676

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:5 (References God): Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Numbers 33:52 (Parallel theme): Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

Deuteronomy 12:3 (References God): And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

Deuteronomy 7:5 (Parallel theme): But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

Exodus 32:20 (Parallel theme): And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Leviticus 18:3 (Parallel theme): After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances.

2 Chronicles 33:9 (Parallel theme): So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.