

Exodus 23:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

Analysis

Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

בְּרִיבּוֹ: בְּרִיבּוֹ: בְּרִיבּוֹ:
לֹא אַתָּה רֹאשׁ תְּחִזֵּק
a poor H3808 Neither shalt thou countenance man in his cause
H1800 H1921 H7379

Additional Cross-References

James 3:17 (Parallel theme): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Leviticus 19:15 (Parallel theme): Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Deuteronomy 1:17 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.