

Exodus 23:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

Analysis

If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

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

כִּי	תִּרְאֶה	חֵמ וֹר	שֹׂנְאֶךָ	רִיבְךָ	תִּתְּחַת	
H3588	If thou see	the ass	of him that hateth	thee lying	H8478	
	H7200	H2543	H8130	H7257		
מִשָּׂא וְ	וְהִדַּלְתָּ	תִּעֲזֹר בִּ	לֹא	תִּעֲזֹר בִּ	תִּעֲזֹר בִּ	עִמּוֹ:
under his burden	and wouldst forbear	help	H0	help	help	H5973
H4853	H2308	H5800		H5800	H5800	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 22:4 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

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