

Exodus 23:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Analysis

Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The alien-protection command recurs (22:21)—its repetition shows importance. 'Ye know the heart' (וְאַתֶּם יְדַעְתֶּם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר, ve'attem yeda'tem et-nefesh hager) means 'you know the life/soul/experience of the stranger.' Israel's Egypt experience should create empathy, not bitterness. Oppressed people can become oppressors (hurt people hurt people) unless grace breaks the cycle. God commands remembering suffering to cultivate compassion. Deuteronomy 10:19 adds 'love the stranger, for you were strangers.' Gospel application: we were 'alienated and enemies' (Colossians 1:21), now reconciled—our redemption should create radical hospitality.

Historical Context

Israel's 400-year slavery in Egypt (Genesis 15:13) was to be remembered not for victimhood but for empathy. God repeatedly uses their suffering as motivation for compassion toward outsiders.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How should remembering our own suffering produce compassion rather than bitterness toward others?
2. In what ways were Christians 'strangers' before salvation, and how should this shape our treatment of outsiders?

Interlinear Text

גֵּר יִם	ל א	תִּלְוֶהָ	וְאַתָּה	יָדַעְתֶּם	אֵת	
a stranger	H3808	Also thou shalt not oppress	H859	for ye know	H853	
H1616		H3905		H3045		
נֶפֶשׁ	גֵּר יִם	כִּי	גֵּר יִם	הָיִיתָ	בְּאֶרֶץ	מִצְרָיִם:
the heart	a stranger	seeing	a stranger	H1961	in the land	of Egypt
H5315	H1616	H3588	H1616		H776	H4714

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 22:21 (References Egypt): Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 27:19 (Parallel theme): Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Matthew 18:33 (Parallel theme): Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?