

Exodus 3:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

Analysis

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty (בָּנָתָתִי אֶת-חָן פָּעָם-בָּנָה בְּעִינֵיכֶם)—God promises **favour** (חָן, chen, "grace/favor") in Egyptians' eyes. **Ye shall not go empty** (לَا תַלְכֹו רַיקָם)—Israel will receive compensation for their labor. This anticipates 11:2-3 and 12:35-36 when Egyptians give Israel gold, silver, and clothing. This isn't theft but just recompense—wages for 400 years of slavery (cf. Deuteronomy 15:13-14 which requires sending freed slaves away with provision). God ensures His people leave enriched, not impoverished, and these spoils later fund the tabernacle (25:1-7, 35:4-9).

Historical Context

The 'plundering of Egypt' fulfilled Genesis 15:14 ('afterward shall they come out with great substance'). Archaeological evidence shows that slaves rarely possessed wealth; Israel's enrichment reversed their economic devastation. The gold and silver later used for tabernacle construction (Exodus 25-31, 35-40) came from these Egyptian gifts, showing God's providence—even pagan wealth serves His purposes when redirected to worship.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

1. How does God's provision of Egyptian wealth to Israel illustrate that He compensates His servants for faithful endurance through suffering?
2. What does the subsequent use of Egyptian gold for the tabernacle teach about redeeming secular resources for sacred purposes?

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Exodus 12:36 (References Egypt): And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Psalms 105:37 (Parallel theme): He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

Exodus 11:3 (References Egypt): And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

Proverbs 16:7 (Parallel theme): When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Psalms 106:46 (Parallel theme): He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

Genesis 39:21 (Parallel theme): But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Acts 7:10 (References Egypt): And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Nehemiah 1:11 (Parallel theme): O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

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