

Jeremiah 7:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,
and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after
other gods to your hurt:

Analysis

The amendment requirements continue with three prohibitions: 'If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow' (gēr-yātôm wě'almānâ lō' ta'āšōqû, גֵּר-יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה לֹא תַאֲשֹׁקוּ). These three groups—foreigner (gēr), orphan (yātôm), widow ('almānâ)—represent society's most vulnerable, lacking family protection and legal advocates. The verb 'āšaq (oppress, exploit) means taking advantage through power imbalance. Covenant law repeatedly commanded protecting these groups (Exodus 22:21-24, Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17-21), reflecting God's character (Psalm 68:5, 146:9). The second prohibition: 'and shed not innocent blood in this place' (wědām nāqî 'al-tišpēķû bammāqôm hazzeh). This addresses both judicial murder and violent oppression. The third: 'neither walk after other gods to your hurt' (wě'aḥārê 'ēlōhîm 'āḥērîm lō'-tēlēķû lēra' lāķem)—idolatry brings self-destruction. These requirements encompass both vertical (worship God alone) and horizontal (treat people justly) covenant obligations.

Historical Context

Protection of the vulnerable was central to Torah (Exodus 22:21-27, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 24:17-22, 27:19). Yet Judah systematically violated these commands. Isaiah 1:17, 23 indicts leaders: 'Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow...Thy princes are rebellious...they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.' The shedding of innocent blood included child sacrifice to

Molech (Jeremiah 19:4-5, 2 Kings 21:16) and political murders (Jeremiah 26:20-23). Idolatry remained pervasive despite Josiah's reforms. These violations demonstrated comprehensive covenant unfaithfulness that no amount of temple ritual could offset. Jesus later demonstrated priority for the vulnerable (Matthew 25:31-46), and James defines pure religion as caring for orphans and widows (James 1:27). Authentic faith always produces justice and mercy toward the powerless.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does your church community actively protect and serve society's most vulnerable members—immigrants, orphans, widows, the poor?
2. In what ways might you be 'walking after other gods'—trusting wealth, success, comfort, or security instead of God alone?

Interlinear Text

גַּר	יֵתֹום	וְאַלְמָנָה	לֹא	תַעֲשֶׂה קוֹ	דָּם
not the stranger	the fatherless	and the widow	H3808	If ye oppress	blood
H1616	H3490	H490		H6231	H1818
נָקִי	אֶל	תִּשְׁפֹּךְ ו	בַּמָּקוֹם	הַזֶּה	אַחֲרַיִם
not innocent	H408	and shed	in this place	H2088	after
H5355		H8210	H4725	H310	H430
אֲחֵרִים	לֹא	תֵלֶכְו	לְבַע	לָכֶם:	
other	H3808	H1980	to your hurt	H0	
H312			H7451		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 13:10 (References God): This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

Deuteronomy 8:19 (References God): And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

Deuteronomy 11:28 (References God): And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Jeremiah 2:34 (Blood): Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

Isaiah 59:7 (Blood): Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

Jeremiah 19:4 (Blood): Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their

fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

Deuteronomy 24:17 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

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.

James 1:27 (References God): Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Malachi 3:5 (Parallel theme): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.