

Psalms 81:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

Analysis

For this was a statute for Israel (כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא)—Choq means an engraved decree, something permanently inscribed in law (Leviticus 23). These festivals weren't optional cultural traditions but divine commands. **And a law of the God of Jacob** (mishpat, ordinance or judgment)—the dual terms emphasize both the decree's authority and its rightness.

The covenant name **God of Jacob** recalls the patriarchal promises (Genesis 28:13-15). Festival observance wasn't mere ritual but covenant renewal, where Israel rehearsed their identity as God's redeemed people. Rejecting the festivals meant rejecting covenant relationship itself—a principle Christ reaffirmed by fulfilling, not abolishing, the Law (Matthew 5:17).

Historical Context

Moses established Israel's festal calendar at Sinai (Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29), codifying worship rhythms that predated the Law (Genesis 1:14). These appointed times structured Israel's entire year around remembering God's saving acts—Passover (exodus), Pentecost (law-giving), Trumpets (awakening), Atonement (cleansing), Tabernacles (wilderness provision).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do God's 'statutes' and 'laws' reveal both His authority and His desire for relationship with His people?
2. What Christian practices and ordinances function as covenant renewal in the new covenant (Lord's Supper, baptism, gathered worship)?
3. Why does God command specific times and ways to worship rather than leaving everything to personal preference?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	חֵק	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	וְהָיָה	מִשְׁפָּט	לֵאלֹהֵי	יַעֲקֹב:
H3588	For this was a statute	for Israel	H1931	and a law	of the God	of Jacob
	H2706	H3478		H4941	H430	H3290

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