

Exodus 18:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws.

Analysis

When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws—Moses reiterates his comprehensive role: judging disputes and teaching divine law. The phrase 'judge between one and another' (בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ, v'shafat'ti bein ish u'vein re'ehu) shows conflict resolution. The distinction between 'statutes' (חקים, chuqqim, prescribed ordinances) and 'laws' (תּוֹרָה, torotav, instructions) indicates diverse types of divine guidance Moses communicates. This verse's repetition (cf. v.15) emphasizes Moses' conviction about his calling. Yet good calling doesn't automatically mean right method—Moses' dedication is admirable but his solo approach is unsustainable. Jethro's forthcoming counsel will improve method without questioning calling.

Historical Context

Before formal law-giving at Sinai, Moses likely taught based on patriarchal tradition, creation order, and ongoing divine revelation. His teaching role prepared Israel for receiving comprehensive law.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' clarity about calling (teaching God's laws) show that right vision can coexist with wrong method?
2. What does the distinction between 'statutes' and 'laws' teach about diverse types of divine guidance?

Interlinear Text

לְבָם יְהִי הַקָּרְבָּן	תְּבִרְךָ	אֵל יְבָא
H3588 H1961 H0	When they have a matter	they come
	H1697	H935
עַלְמִי וְשִׁפְטָתִי	בֵּין אֲשֶׁר	רְאֵעַת הָאֶחָד
unto me and I judge	between one	and another
H8199 H996 H376		H7453
וְהַזְׁדַעַתִּי	אֶת	תְּזַרְעִים
and I do make them know	the statutes	of God and his laws
H3045 H853 H2706		H430 H853 H8451

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 24:14 (Parallel theme): And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

1 Corinthians 6:1 (Word): Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

Deuteronomy 5:1 (Judgment): And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

Deuteronomy 4:5 (Judgment): Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

2 Samuel 15:3 (Parallel theme): And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

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