

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' (וְשָׁפַטְתִּי בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ, v'shafat'ti bein ish uvein re'ehu) shows conflict resolution. The distinction between 'statutes' (חֻקִּים, chuqqim, prescribed ordinances) and 'laws' (תּוֹרָתוֹ, 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

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

כִּי	יְהִי הֵם	לָהֶם	דְּבַר	בָּא	אֵלַי
H3588	H1961	H0	When they have a matter	they come	H413
			H1697	H935	
וְשָׁפְטֵנִי	בֵּין	אֶחָד	וּבֵין	רֵעֵהוּ	
unto me and I judge	H996	between one	H996	and another	
H8199		H376		H7453	
וְהִדַּעְתִּי	אֶת	דִּקְנֵי	הָאֱלֹהִים	וְאֶת	תּוֹרֹתָיו:
and I do make them know	H853	the statutes	of God	H853	and his laws
H3045		H2706	H430		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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