

Exodus 18:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Analysis

And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves—The system works as designed: routine cases handled locally, difficult cases escalated. The phrase 'at all seasons' (בְּכָל־עֵת, b'khol-et) confirms continuous justice, not periodic hearings. 'Hard causes' (הַדָּבָר הַקָּשָׁה, hadavar haqasheh) require Moses' unique access to God and wisdom. The distribution 'every small matter they judged themselves' shows the delegates' competence for routine decisions. This balance—delegation with escalation—prevents both burnout and loss of quality. The success of this system proves Jethro's wisdom and Moses' wise implementation. This models how church leadership should function: elders handle routine pastoral care, complex doctrinal or discipline issues escalate to broader leadership.

Historical Context

This system functioned throughout Israel's wilderness wandering and provided the governmental structure for settling Canaan. Its success validated organizational wisdom from outside Israel's covenant community.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does escalation of hard cases prevent both overwhelming leaders and making poor local decisions?
2. What does the system's success teach about implementing organizational wisdom even from outside sources?

Interlinear Text

פְּדָבָר אָתָּה יְשֻׁפֹּת אֶת־בָּכֶל הַעַם עַת־בְּכָל הַעַם אָתָּה יְשֻׁפֹּת אֶת־פְּדָבָר
And they judged the people at all seasons causes H1697 H6256 H5971 H8199 H853 H3605

פְּקֻדָּת | פְּדֻבָּר יְבִיא וְלֹא מֵשׁ הַיְלָל בְּקֻשָּׁה
the hard they brought H413 unto Moses H3605 causes but every small
H7186 H935 H4872 H1697 H6996

וְיִשְׁפַּט אֶת־
And they judged H8199

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 18:22 (Judgment): And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee.