

Exodus 21:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

Analysis

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

This judgment (mishpat) from the Book of the Covenant applies moral law to civil society. God's justice is comprehensive—addressing economic disputes, family relations, and community welfare. The case laws teach covenant people how to love God and neighbor practically. Through detailed ordinances, God shapes Israel as holy nation, distinct from pagan neighbors. These laws reveal God's character: just, merciful, concerned with details of everyday life.

Historical Context

The Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20:22-23:33) is Israel's foundational legal code, predating later expansions in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It addresses civil, criminal, and ceremonial matters.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this law reveal God's character—His justice, mercy, or holiness?
2. What New Testament principles build upon or fulfill this Old Testament regulation?

Interlinear Text

וְכִי H3588	יָזַד H2102	אִם יִשׁ H376	עַל H5921	רֵעֵהוּ H7453	לְהַרְגוֹ H2026
come presumptuously		But if a man	upon his neighbour	to slay	
בְּעָרְמוֹ הַ H6195	מֵעַם H5973	מִזְבִּחִי H4196	תִּקְחֶנּוּ H3947	לָמוּת: H4191	
him with guile		him from mine altar	thou shalt take	that he may die	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:26 (Sacrifice): For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,