

Exodus 21:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed:

Analysis

And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed:

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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

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	יִרְיֶה strive H7378	אִישׁ together and one H376	וְהָכָה smite H5221	אִישׁ together and one H376	אֶת H853	רֵעֵהוּ another H7453
בְּאֶבֶן with a stone H68	אוֹ or H176	בְּאֶגְרוֹ with his fist H106	וְלֹא H3808	יָמוֹת and he die H4191	וְנֹכַח not but keepeth H5307	לְמִשְׁכָּבֵהוּ his bed H4904

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 21:20 (Parallel theme): And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.