

Exodus 21:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

Analysis

If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

אִם לֹא יֵלֶדֶת הָאִשָּׁה לִּזְמַן לַאֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
H518 If his master H113 have given H5414 H0 him a wife H802 and she have born H3205 H0

לֹא יֵלֶדֶת יְהוֹה וְיִלְדֵי יְהוֹה וְהָאִשָּׁה בְּנֵי וְאִתּוֹ בָּנִים
H1121 him sons H176 or daughters H1323 H802 him a wife H3206 and her children H1961 If his master H113

בְּגִפוֹ: יֵצֵא וְהָיָה
H1931 and he shall go out H3318 by himself H1610

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