

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

אָם	לְאָדָן יְפָ	לְאָדָן יְפָ	וְאֶתְנָה	לְז	בְּאֶשְׁתָּה	בְּאֶלְדָּה	לְז
H518	If his master	have given	H0	him a wife	and she have born	H0	
	H113	H5414		H802	H3205		
him sons	H176	or daughters	him a wife	and her children	H1961	תְּהִלָּה	לְאָדָן יְפָ
H1121		H1323	H802	H3206			If his master
					H113		
וְאֶתְנָה	וְאֶתְנָה	בְּגַפּוֹ					
H1931	and he shall go out	by himself					
	H3318	H1610					

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