

Mishpatim “Judgements”

Torah Reading: Exodus 21:1 - 24:18

Haftarah Reading: Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26

Study Questions

1. Why do you think the specific day-by-day rules for life in Exodus begin with a discussion about slavery, right after the Ten Commandments?
2. Why does the Lord permit parents to sell their daughter(s) into slavery, according to Shemot 21:7?
3. How do you feel about the death penalty?
4. Does Shemot 21:23 teach retribution, justice, or revenge?
5. What can we learn about the person/work of Messiah or who we are in Him from the ordinances regarding restitution in chapters 21 and 22?
6. Why does the Lord give so many rules governing the “stranger”?
7. What is the purpose given for Shabbat in Shemot 23:12?
8. What festivals are singled out in Shemot 23? What special things are done on them which does not apply to the other Holy Days? Why do you think these days have these special ordinances?
9. What is the difference between what God seemed to say in Shemot 23:26 and the reality of the situation?

Study Notes

Interpreting specific statutes

Two levels of interpretation

halachic - understanding their application to every day life

Understanding how they point to Yeshua. (Luke 24:44-45).

Slavery

How was the slavery discussed here different than the rest of the world?

Freedom was the main focus of these statutes.

Discuss Shemot 21:5. Can you imagine a slave not wanting to go free?

Female Slaves

The male slave is called an ‘avad’. The female slave would be expected to be called an “avadah” but is called ‘amah’ instead.

This does not mean a slave girl in the usual sense. Her status is different than that of a male slave.

She could marry the master or his son but only with her consent.

Death Penalty

Criminal homicide, premeditated murder, hitting one's parents, kidnapping and parent abuse.

2 Timothy 3 discusses the spirit of rebellion that will come up people and their children in the last days.

What is murder? Shemot 21:17 - Matthew 5:21-22

Making Restitution

"law of talion" - exact equivalence for injury

Does Shemot 21:18-19 command an eye for an eye? Does 21:22-25?

Safeguards for true worship

Rejecting sorcery and bestiality. Both were practiced by pagans.

Shemot 22:19 specifically warns against sacrificing to any other god besides the Lord.

Protecting the vulnerable

Strangers, widows, orphans, and the poor.

The Torah cautions us regarding our behavior towards the stranger no less than 36 times.

Matthew 25:34-40 discusses many of these issues.

Ratification of the covenant

Shemot 24:3-4. The people ratify the covenant.

Moses wrote down all that God told him.

See Deut. 28 and 29 for consequences.

As the ratification comes to a close we have both the book of the covenant (24:7) and the blood of the covenant (24:8) to remind Israel of God's gracious promises.