

Gaining Clarity on Justice and Righteousness in the Bible

March 5, 12, 19

Minnehaha Academy

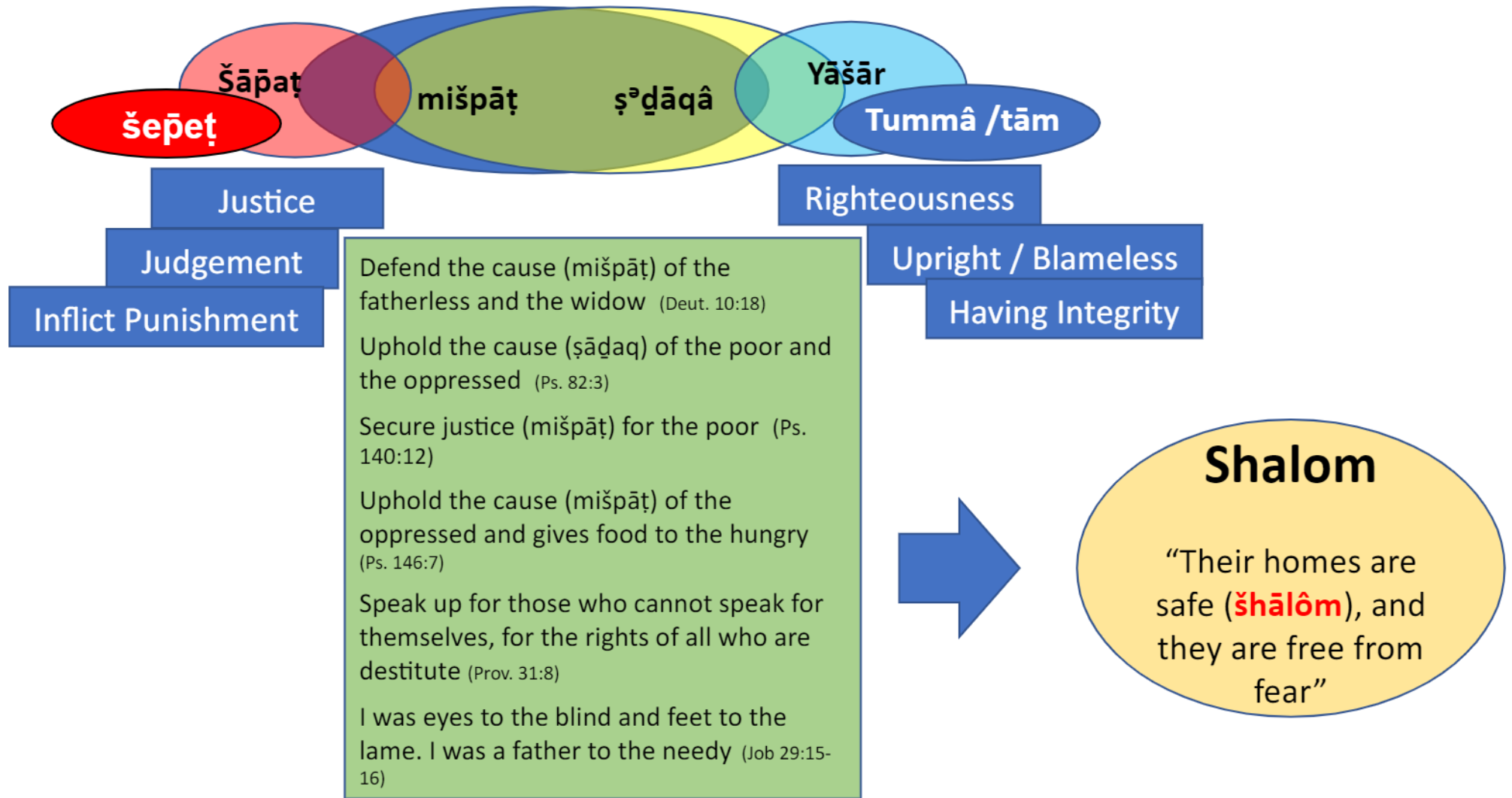
Bill Barberg

Preston Peterson



Lesson Two: Old Testament Use

Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning



Loving our (vulnerable) neighbors as ourselves

Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning

Defend the *cause* (mišpāṭ) of the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 10:18)

Uphold the *cause* (ṣādaq) of the poor and the oppressed (Ps. 82:3)

Secure *justice* (mišpāṭ) for the poor (Ps. 140:12)

Uphold the *cause* (mišpāṭ) of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry (Ps. 146:7)

I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy (Job 29:15-16)

I made the widow's heart sing. (Job 29:13)

Loving our (vulnerable) neighbors as ourselves - Spreading šhālôm

Some Major Old Testament Themes

The Blessings of Abraham

mišpāt

s^odāqâ

The Wisdom Literature
and OT Examples of “God’s Way”

mišpāt

s^odāqâ

Bad and Good Shepherds

mišpāt

s^odāqâ

Predictions of the Messiah

mišpāt

s^odāqâ

The Message of the Prophets

mišpāt

s^odāqâ

The Three-Fold Promise to Abraham



In Genesis

God Promises three things in the covenant with Abraham

- 1) Land
- 2) Many descendants (Nation)
- 3) A Blessing to All Nations

Two Pathways of Blessing All Nations



Genesis 18:18-19

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.

For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is *right* (š'dāqâ) and *just* (mišpāt), so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”

Two Pathways of Blessing All Nations



The blessing of forgiveness

Galatians 3:8-18

Through the one seed - Jesus

The blessing of the cross and saving blood of Jesus–Christ became the curse for us

We are blessed with forgiveness by our faith, not by works or keeping the law

The blessing of shalom as God’s people do mišpāt and ṣḏāqâ

The promise of Gen. 18:18-19

Through the many seeds

Gal. 3:29a

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed,”

Passing the Promise through Isaac and Jacob

Genesis 26:2-5 The promise is passed to Isaac

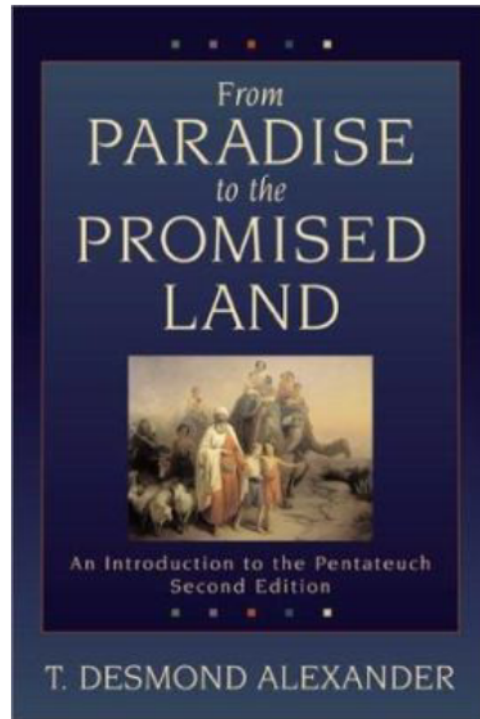
Genesis 28:12-14 Passing the promise to Jacob

¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

¹³There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

¹⁴Your descendants (zera') will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. **All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring (zera').**

Understanding Zera'



3 Reviews ⓘ

[Write review](#)

From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch

By T. Desmond Alexander

Understanding Zera'

The Chosen “Seed”

Closely linked to the genealogical structure of Genesis is the frequent use of the Hebrew word *zera'*, perhaps best translated as “seed.” Unfortunately, the NIV translates *zera'* with a variety of terms—the most common being “descendants,” “offspring,” “seed.” For this reason the importance of the concept of “seed” in Genesis is easily missed. *Zera'* is a keyword, however, occurring 59 times in Genesis compared to 170 times in the rest of the Old Testament.²

Understanding Zera'

Several factors are worth noting briefly about the use of the term “seed” in Genesis. (1) The Hebrew word *zera'*, like the English word “sheep,” can be either singular or plural; it may denote a single seed or many seeds. An example of the former comes in 21:13, where Ishmael is described as Abraham’s “seed.” However, in 28:14 *zera'* refers to the “seed” (descendants) of Jacob, “who will be like the dust of the earth.”

Zera'

Distant future	Jesus	All in Christ Israelites
Immediate	Isaac	Kings
	One	Vast Multitude

The Emphasis on Teaching the Children

Deuteronomy 4:8-9

And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws (mišpāṭ) as this body of laws (tôrâ) I am setting before you today?

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. **Teach them to your children and to their**

English (NASB) [?]	Strong's	Root & Transliterated
statutes	H2706	חֻק ḥōq
and judgments PHRASE	H4941	מִשְׁפָּט mišpāṭ
as		
righteous	H6662	צַדִּיק ṣadīq

God reminded them to not forget how HE treated THEM

Deuteronomy 24:17a, 22

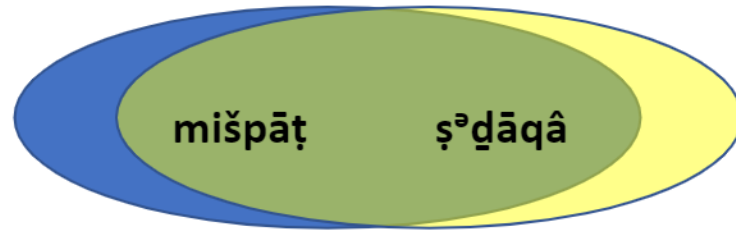
‘Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of *justice* (**mišpāṭ**)... Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.’

Leviticus 19:34

‘The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and **you shall love him as yourself**, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.’

The lesson to be learned from their time in Egypt is not primarily “God will take care of me,” but “God calls me to care for the vulnerable.”

David, a man after God's heart, practiced Mishpat

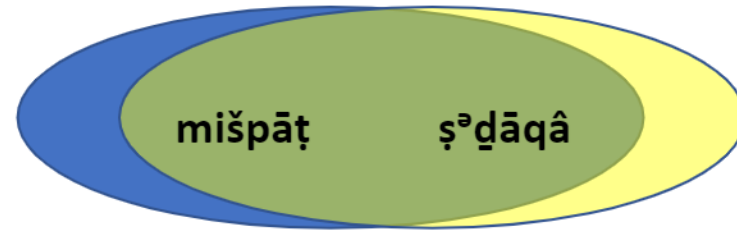


2 Samuel 8:15

David reigned over all Israel, doing what was *just* (**mišpāt**) and *right* (**šׁdāqâ**) for all his people.

We can see his heart in the way he taught his children **mišpāt**.

David's prayer for his son, Solomon



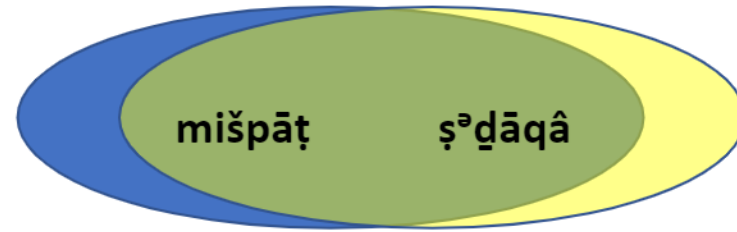
Psalms 72: 1-4

Of Solomon. Endow the king with your *justice* (**mišpāṭ**), O God, the royal son with your *righteousness* (**šׁdāqâ**). May he judge your people in *righteousness* (**šedeq**), your afflicted ones with *justice* (**mišpāṭ**). May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of *righteousness* (**šׁdāqâ**). May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; may he crush the oppressor.

Poor



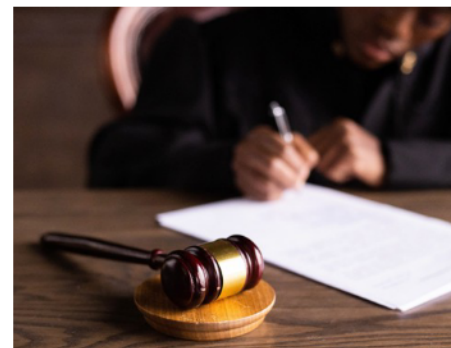
More of David's prayer for Solomon to do Mishpat



Psalms 72: 11-14

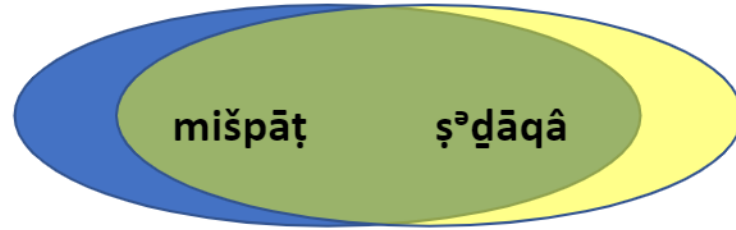
“May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him. For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.”

Does endowing the king with **justice** refer to this?



Do you see how we can misunderstand the use of “justice” in this prayer?

David concludes his prayer for Solomon

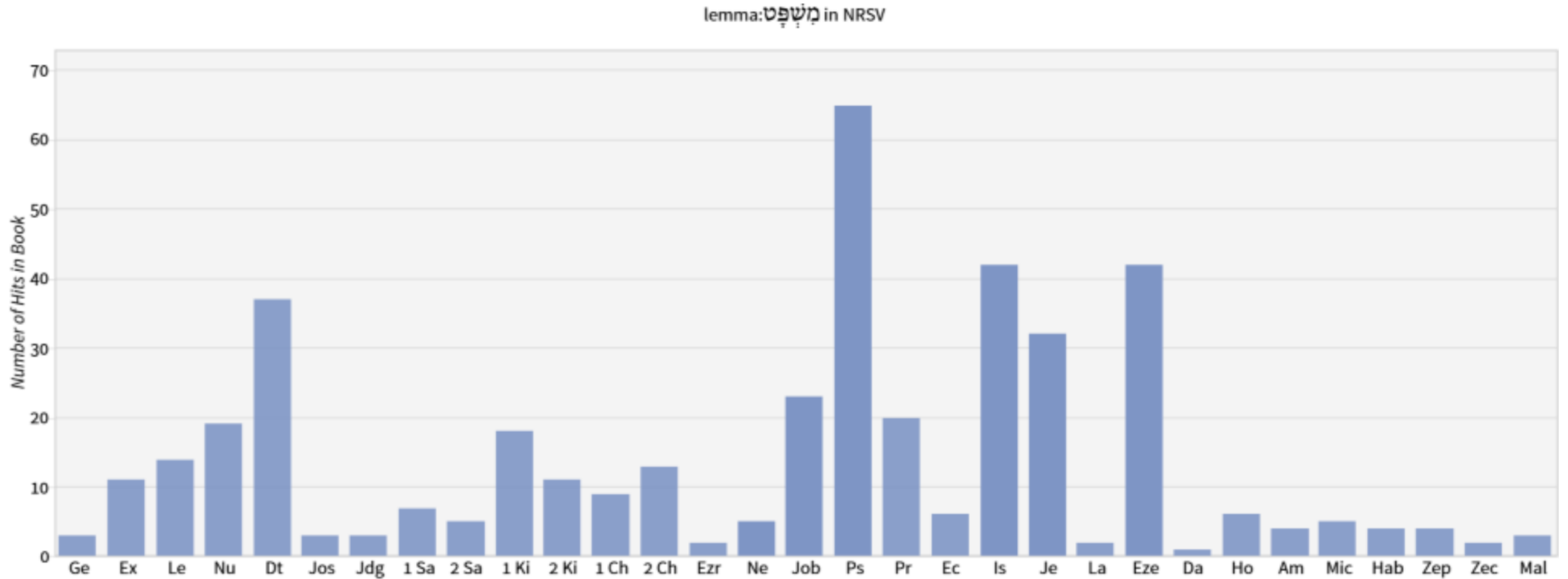


Psalms 72: 17

May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. **Then all nations will be blessed through him**, and they will call him blessed.

With this type of leadership, vulnerable people in all nations are blessed with **Shalom**.

Justice as translated *Mishpat*



Mishpat is used 60 times in Psalms alone

The Wisdom Literature
and OT Examples of “God’s Way”

mišpāṭ

ṣ̣ḏāqâ

Psalm 97:1-2 “The Lord reigns ...*righteousness* (**ṣ̣ḏḗq**) and *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) are the foundation of his throne.”



Psalm 33:5, 9-10

“The LORD loves *righteousness* (**ṣ̣ḏāqâ**) and *justice* (**mišpāṭ**);” ...

Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation. My whole being will exclaim, “Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them.”

Connecting to the New Testament

Luke 10:25-29

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Doing Mishpat (rescuing a needy person who had been robbed)

Luke 10:30-35

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

Connecting to the New Testament

Luke 10:36-37

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Mishpat is used 60 times in Psalms alone

Psalm 103:6

The LORD works *righteousness* (ṣ^odāqâ) and *justice* (mišpāt) for all the oppressed.

Psalm 112:4-5

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious (ḥannûn) and compassionate and *righteous* (ṣadîq). Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with *justice* (mišpāt).

What were some of the ways that God's people practiced this?

God's commands for bringing "justice" to the poor and vulnerable included *systemic* and *structural* forms (in addition to individual actions)

Cancellation of debts for individuals

Liberation of slaves and freeing prisoners

Restoration of land and inheritance to its original owners

Commands
regarding
the Jubilee

Forbidding the charging of interest on loans

Rectification of economic injustice – overpricing, dishonest weights and measures, etc.

Establishing laws to protect the less fortunate

These are all great topics for additional study.

Mishpat is used 20 times in Proverbs

Proverbs 16:11

Honest (**mišpāṭ**) scales and balances belong to the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.

Proverbs 21:3

To do what is *right* (**šᵅdāqâ**) and *just* (**mišpāṭ**) is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

A Proverb with Serious Implications for our Investments

Proverbs 16:8 (NASB)

Better is a little with *righteousness* (שׁדָּאָה) than great income with *injustice*. (lō' mišpāṭ).

English (NASB) [?]	Strong's	Root & Transliterated
with injustice PHRASE	H3808	לֹ' lō'
↑	H4941	מִשְׁפָּט mišpāṭ

A Call for Deep Study of this Word

Proverbs 28:5 (NIV)

Evildoers do not understand *what is right* (**mišpāṭ**), but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.

Proverbs 28:5 (ESV)

Evil men do not understand *justice*, (**mišpāṭ**), but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.

Introducing new Hebrew Word: dîn

Psalm 140:12

I know that the LORD secures *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) for the poor and upholds the *cause* (**dîn**) of the needy.

Proverbs 28:5 (NIV)

The *righteous* (**ṣadîq**) care about *justice* (**dîn**) for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Proverbs 28:5 (NASB20)

The *righteous* (**ṣadîq**) is concerned for the *rights* (**dîn**) of the poor; The wicked does not understand such concern.

This sounds a lot like Job...

Proverbs 28:5 (NASB20)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights (**dîn**) of all who are destitute.

The Need for Good Shepherds- an Old Testament Theme



A frequent metaphor – Shepherds and Sheep

- The leaders of Israel
- Jesus – God coming as the Good Shepherd
- Disciple-Leaders – Shepherds who help and protect others

A Major Message to the “Shepherds of Israel”

Ezekiel 34

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel:

The Bad Shepherds who only take care of themselves.	Characteristics of how God will shepherd with mišpāṭ.
“Woe to you...”	V16. “I will shepherd the flock with justice (mišpāṭ)”
V3. “You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.”	V11. “I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.” V15. “I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD.”
V4. “You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured.”	V16. “I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak,”
V4. “You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost.”	v.12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

These prophecies focus on the Good Shepherd bringing **šhālôm** to the lost and weak

Jeremiah delivered a similar Message

Jeremiah 23:1, 3-5 (Slide 1)

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD...

“I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.”

The Good Shepherd(s) will DO Mishpat and Tsedakah

Jeremiah 23:1, 3-5 (Slide 2)

“I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.”

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is *just* (**mišpāṭ**) and *right* (**ṣ̣ḏāqâ**) in the land.”

God’s plan not only brings King Jesus, but also other shepherds who bring **Shalom**.

Many Prophecies of Jesus emphasize Mishpat and Tzedakah



Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of *Peace* (**šhālôm**).

Of the greatness of his government and *peace* (**šhālôm**). there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with *justice* (**mišpāt**) and *righteousness* (**ṣ̌ᵘdāqâ**) from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this..



Notice the important role of Tsedakah and Mishpat

Isaiah 28:16-17

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic. I will make *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) the measuring line and *righteousness* (**ṣ̣ᵉḏāqâ**) the plumb line;



This is quoted in 1 Peter 2:7, clearly referring to Jesus.

*How does seeing **mišpāṭ** and **ṣ̣ᵉḏāqâ** convey something different from what we might think when reading justice and righteousness*

Jesus will bring Justice (without wearing Mishpat Glasses)

Isaiah 42:1 (Quoted in Matt. 12:18)

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring **justice** to the nations.



Triple Mishpat in a verse



Isaiah 42:1-4

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth *justice* (**mišpāṭ**); he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”

Quoted in Matt. 12:18-20 to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophesy.

(The Hebrew, not the Greek or English, is the original intent of these verses.)

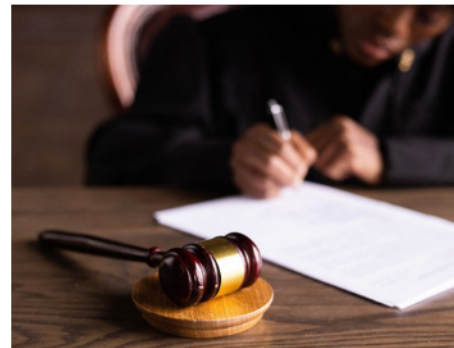
How does seeing **mišpāṭ** rather than “**justice**” clarify the ministry of Jesus?

Without Wearing Mishpat Glasses

Jeremiah 23:5

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is **just** and **right** in the land.

How can God be
Holy and Just?



By sending his son to die on the cross and pay the price for our sins, so we can be forgiven.

The Messiah-King will DO Mishpat and Tzedakah

Jeremiah 23:5

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is *just* (**mišpāṭ**) and *right* (**ṣ̣ḏāqâ**) in the land.”

These prophecies emphasize the king who is bringing **šhālôm** to earth.

This is not in conflict with bringing the blessings of forgiveness and salvation, and it is not claiming that our focus is to create heaven on earth so we don't need a savior.

.

Main Points of Major Messianic Prophecies

He will establish and uphold the Davidic kingdom with **mišpāṭ** and **ṣ̣^odāqâ**

...will make **mišpāṭ** the measuring line and **ṣ̣^odāqâ** the plumb line

...he will bring **mišpāṭ** to the nations

...he will bring forth **mišpāṭ**; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice **mišpāṭ** on earth.

...who will reign wisely and do what is **mišpāṭ** and **ṣ̣^odāqâ** in the land.

Improving Our Understanding of Justice in Micah 6:8



Micah 6:8 (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To **act *justly* (mišpāṭ)** and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8 (ESV)

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to **do *justice* (mišpāṭ)**, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The focus of some of the strongest rebukes...

Isaiah 1:10

“Hear the word of the LORD, you **rulers of Sodom**; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”

Why would Isaiah call them rulers of Sodom?

What sin do we think of when we think of the sin of Sodom?

The focus of some of the strongest rebukes...

Isaiah 1:10

“Hear the word of the LORD, you **rulers of Sodom**; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”

Ezekiel 16:49-50

“ ‘Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.’”

The focus of some of the strongest rebukes...

Isaiah 1:10-13

“Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”

“The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?

Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.”

The focus of some of the strongest rebukes...

Isaiah 1:14-17

“Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.”

“When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!

Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong.

Learn to do right; seek *justice* (**mišpāṭ**). Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Why is God so upset by his people neglecting the vulnerable?

God is saying that many good things are very unpleasing to Him.

“I hate [your festivals] with all my being!”

“I hide my eyes from you” [when you pray].

What sin does he call out?

What repentance does he call for?

The Second Greatest
Command is being largely
ignored:
Do mišpāṭ

“Learn to do right; seek *justice* (**mišpāṭ**). Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Without Mishpat Glasses...

Isaiah 10:1-2

“Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.”

Unjust Laws and Human Rights

Isaiah 10:1-2

“Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their *rights* (**mišpāṭ**) and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.”

The emphasis of **mišpāṭ** is the root of our concept of Human Rights.



Does God seem to care about systemic issues like unjust laws and policies?

Delivering the person who has been robbed

Jeremiah 21:11-12

“Then say to the household of the king of Judah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O house of David, thus says the LORD:

“Administer *justice* (**mišpāṭ**) every morning and deliver the person who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor, that My wrath may not go forth like fire and burn with none to extinguish it, because of the evil of their deeds.

God prefers Mishpat over being Worshipped

Amos 5:21-24 [This is what the Lord says...]

“I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let *justice* (**mišpāt**) roll on like a river, *righteousness* (**ṣ̣ḏāqâ**) like a never-failing stream!

Even some of the most hope-filled verses ...

Ezekiel 34:24-27

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

Even some of the most hope-filled verses emphasize Mishpat

Ezekiel 34:24-27

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (**mišpāt**).”



The Final Admonition in the Old Testament

Malachi 4:4

“Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes (ḥōq) and *ordinances* (**mišpāṭ**) which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.”

Refers back to Deuteronomy 4 where Moses, in Horeb, emphasized that the people should **teach their children** to follow **mišpāṭ** (used 3x in that chapter) .

How OT Themes Continue in the NT

The Blessings of Abraham

mišpāt s^odāqâ

The Wisdom Literature
and OT Examples

mišpāt s^odāqâ

Bad and Good Shepherds

mišpāt s^odāqâ

The Messiah and the Kingdom

mišpāt s^odāqâ

The Message of the Prophets

mišpāt s^odāqâ

Two Pathways of Blessings

The “more important” practices

Jesus, Leaders and Disciples

Our Savior and Lord/King

The rebukes of John and Jesus

The OT Themes Continue into the New Testament

Luke 3:9-11 [John the Baptist]

“The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

Gaining Clarity on Justice and Righteousness in the Bible

March 5, 12, 19

Minnehaha Academy

Bill Barberg

Preston Peterson



Next Week – Justice and Righteousness in the New Testament