

Exodus 21:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit.

Analysis

If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit.

This case law addresses property damage and personal injury, establishing liability principles. The mishpatim (מִשְׁפָּטִים, judgments) apply Decalogue principles to everyday situations, creating just society. Owner responsibility reflects broader biblical principle: we're stewards of possessions, accountable for harm they cause. The law balances justice (compensation for victims) with mercy (proportional rather than excessive penalties). These principles undergird modern tort law and demonstrate God's concern for social order.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi, Hittite) addressed similar property issues but often with class-based penalties. Israel's law applied more uniformly regardless of social status.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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?

וְיָ	חֹרֶ	הַשֶּׁ	אֶת	אִישׁ	אֶל	אֶת	אִשָּׁה	וְיָמָת
H3588	gore	If an ox	H853	a man	H176	H853	or a woman	that they die
	H5055	H7794		H376			H802	H4191
יִסָּקָה	יִסָּקָה	הַשֶּׁ	וְלֹא	יֵאָכֵל	אֶת			
shall be surely	shall be surely	If an ox	H3808	shall not be eaten	H853			
H5619	H5619	H7794		H398				
וּבְשָׂרוֹ	וּבְעֹלָיו	הַשֶּׁ	נִקְיָה:					
and his flesh	but the owner	If an ox	shall be quit					
H1320	H1167	H7794	H5355					

Exodus 21:32 (Parallel theme): If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.