

Exodus 21:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.

Analysis

But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.

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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

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

מִתְמָלֵל	וְאֵם	בָּשָׂר	נִבְחָר	מִתְמָלֵל	וְאֵם	בָּשָׂר
H518	But if the ox	were wont to push with his horn	H1931	in time past		
H7794			H5056			H8543
שָׁלַשׁ	וְאֵם	בָּעֵל	וְאֵם	בָּעֵל	וְאֵם	בָּעֵל
H8032	and it hath been testified	and his owner	H3808	and he hath not kept		
	H5749		H1167			H8104
וּמְתָתֵּן	וְאֵם	אֲשֶׁר	בָּשָׂר	וְאֵם	בָּשָׂר	וְאֵם
also shall be put to death	a man	or a woman	But if the ox	shall be stoned		
H4191	H376	H802	H7794	H5619		
בָּעֵל	וְאֵם	וּמְתָתֵּן				
H1571	and his owner	also shall be put to death	H4191			
H1167						

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