

Exodus 21:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his.

Analysis

The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his.

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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

לְבַעַל יוֹ	הַבּוֹר	יְשַׁלֵּם	כֶּסֶף	וְיָתֵב	לְבַעַל יוֹ
The owner	of the pit	shall make it good	money	and give	The owner
H1167	H953	H7999	H3701	H7725	H1167
וְהַמֵּת	לֹא יִהְיֶה				
of them and the dead					
H4191	H1961	H0			

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