

Exodus 21:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide.

Analysis

And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide.

This case law addresses property damage and personal injury, establishing liability principles. The mishpatim (מִשְׁפָטִים, 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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

רָעַ הַוְשָׁ וְרָאַתְּ יְגַדְּ יְכִי
H3588 hurt ox And if one man's H853 ox another's
H5062 H7794 H376 H7794 H7453

בְּמִתְּבֵן תְּבִנֵּי אֲתָה וְמִתְּכַרְבֵּן אֲתָה
of it and the dead then they shall sell H853 ox the live and divide H853
H4191 H4376 H7794 H2416 H2673

בְּמִתְּבֵן אֲתָה יְגַדְּ מִתְּבֵן
the money H1571 H853 of it and the dead and divide
H3701 H4191 H2673

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