

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 (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

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

וְכִי	יִגַּף	הַשֹּׁרֶץ	אִישׁ	אֶת	הַשֹּׁרֶץ	הַיֵּהוּדִי
H3588	hurt	ox	And if one man's	H853	ox	another's
	H5062	H7794	H376		H7794	H7453
הֵמָּה	וְכִי	יִמְכְּרוּ	אֶת	הַשֹּׁרֶץ	הַחַיִּים	וְיִדְּלוּ:
of it and the dead		then they shall sell	H853	ox	the live	and divide
H4191		H4376		H7794	H2416	H2673
כֶּסֶף	וְיִגַּף	אֶת	הֵמָּה	וְיִדְּלוּ:		
the money	H1571	H853	of it and the dead	and divide		
H3701			H4191	H2673		