

# Exodus 21:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.

## Analysis

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**Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.**

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

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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

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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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

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א ו	נוֹדַע	כִּי	הַשׁוֹר	בָּגַח	הוא	מִתְּמָל וְלִ
H176	<b>Or if it be known</b>	H3588	<b>for ox</b>	<b>hath used to push</b>	H1931	<b>in time past</b>
	H3045		H7794	H5056		H8543
שְׁלֹם	וְלֵא	יִשְׁמְרֵנוּ	בְּעַל יוֹ	יִשְׁלֵם		
H8032	H3808	<b>hath not kept</b>	<b>and his owner</b>	<b>him in he shall surely</b>		
		H8104	H1167	H7999		
יִשְׁלֵם	הַשׁוֹר	תָּחַת	הַשׁוֹר	וְהַמֵּת	יְהִיָּה	לּוֹ:
<b>him in he shall surely</b>	<b>for ox</b>	H8478	<b>for ox</b>	<b>and the dead</b>	H1961	H0
H7999	H7794		H7794	H4191		

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