

Exodus 22:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die,
there shall no blood be shed for him.

Analysis

If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.

Theft laws emphasize restitution over retribution—restoring victims exceeds merely punishing thieves. The graduated penalties (200-500% depending on circumstances) deter theft while providing for victim's losses. This restorative justice model contrasts with purely punitive systems. The principle: sin has consequences requiring repayment. Gospel application: Christ paid infinitely more than our debt, providing ultimate restitution for sin's theft of God's glory.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern theft penalties varied widely—some death, some forced labor, some restitution. Israel's approach balanced deterrence with restoration, protecting both victim and perpetrator.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

אִם בִּמְחֹת רֶת אִמָּץ אִם הִגֵּן בְּיָדָהּ וְהָפָה יָמָיו וְיָמָיו לֹא יִנָּצֵל
H518 breaking up H4290 be found H4672 If a thief H1590 and be smitten H5221 that he die H4191 H369 H0

וְיָמָיו לֹא יִנָּצֵל
there shall no blood
H1818

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 24:43 (Parallel theme): But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Numbers 35:27 (Blood): And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: