

Exodus 22:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

Analysis

If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

This ordinance reveals God's comprehensive justice—regulating economic transactions, property rights, and social relationships. The mishpatim create framework for covenant community to flourish. Each law applies broader principles: love God supremely, love neighbor practically. Modern believers aren't bound by ceremonial laws but should pursue their spirit—justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23). God's character revealed in law guides Christian ethics.

Historical Context

These civil regulations distinguished Israel from surrounding nations, creating a society reflecting God's justice. The laws balance individual rights with community welfare, property rights with compassion for the poor.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

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

אֵם	תִּמְצֵ א	תִּמְצֵ א	בְּיָד ו	הַגִּנֵּב ה	מִשׁ וֹר	עַד
H518	be certainly	be certainly	in his hand	If the theft	whether it be ox	H5704
	H4672	H4672	H3027	H1591	H7794	
וֹר	עַד	שֶׁ ה	חַיִּים	שָׁנָּה יִם	יִשְׁלֹם:	
or ass	H5704	or sheep	alive	double	he shall restore	
H2543		H7716	H2416	H8147	H7999	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 22:1 (Parallel theme): If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

Exodus 22:9 (Parallel theme): For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.

Exodus 22:7 (Parallel theme): If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double.

Revelation 18:6 (Parallel theme): Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Exodus 21:16 (Parallel theme): And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

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