

Exodus 21:28-36 **Indirect Liability**

28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. 29 But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

33 "And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his.

35 "And if one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. 36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

✧ We remember that all Israel were eyewitnesses as God spoke the moral law in the hearing of Israel. We find that the Children of Israel are standing far back from the mountain while Moses is standing near, but the Children of Israel can still hear the words being spoken by God. [Exodus 20:21]

✧ God holds both man and animal liable for the blood of other people with the death penalty prescribed for their death caused by the animal.

✧ If it is the first occurrence, the owner is not penalized but the animal is killed.

✧ If it has been known to attack before, **the animal is to be killed** and **the owner is to be put to death also**, because he did not keep it confined.

✧ On the other hand, if it is decided to impose on the owner a sum of money, then he shall pay whatever is imposed on him, **to redeem his life**.

In His great mercy and grace, God here provides a means of Redemption in this case. This demonstrates the great truth that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and allows a chance to repent. [Ezekiel 18:32] It also demonstrates that God is willing to provide a way out in special cases as He did for all the world of those who believe in His provision of Redemption by the death of Jesus on the cross. [Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:11-12, 1 Peter 1:17-21, Revelation 5:9]

✧ If the ox gores a male or female servant, the **animal is to be put to death**, and the owner pays (30 shekels of silver) the price of a slave, the same price that was paid for the betrayal of Jesus, by the Chief Priests to Judas who betrayed Him. [Matthew 26:15, 27:3-9]

✧ There is also liability for the wrongful death of an animal if one digs a pit and doesn't shield it from straying animals. The penalty is the one responsible pays for animal.

✧ If an ox gores another ox to death, the live ox is to be sold and the money divided between the owner of the live ox and the owner of the dead ox, and the dead ox is divided between them both. The ox is a clean animal and acceptable for food.

✧ On the other hand, if the ox was known to attack before, then the owner shall pay ox for ox, and the dead ox is his because he did not keep his dangerous animal confined.

☆ All these words were heard by Moses and by the Children of Israel as God spoke from heaven, while His awesome presence was visible on the mountain in the most spectacular display of power. [\[Exodus 19:9-19, 20:18, 20:22\]](#)