

# EXODUS 21

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

**Exodus 21:1–36**

**Laws About Servants, Altercations and Animal Control**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.**” (John 3:16–18). “**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!**” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies of **Exodus** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Exodus. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Exodus ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Every word of that study can be found in this word-by-word, verse-by-verse study.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even

though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Exodus available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

**Preface:** The next few chapters deal with various ordinances and the punishment for their transgression. Most of these laws and ordinances can be traced back to the decalogue. Just as our Constitution has provided us a framework upon which to hang our system of government, so have the Ten Commandments provided a framework upon which to hang all correct law. These laws however are not designed by man, but written by God, specifically for nation **Israel** at that particular time.

The Bible Summary of Exodus 21 (in 140 characters or less): *If you buy a Hebrew slave he shall go free in the seventh year. Whoever kills shall be put to death. Whoever injures shall compensate.*<sup>1</sup>

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Exodus. This will be the most extensive examination of Exodus 21, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

## Quotations:

### Outline of Chapter 21:

#### Introduction

vv. 1–11	<b>The Regulation of Slavery</b>
vv. 12–27	<b>Regulations Concerning Acts of Violence</b>
vv. 28–36	<b>Regulations Concerning Livestock</b>

#### Chapter Summary Addendum

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

Preface	<b>Quotations</b>
Introduction	<b>Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Exodus 21</b> (by various commentators)
Introduction	<b>Brief, but insightful observations of Exodus 21</b> (various commentators)
Introduction	<b>Fundamental Questions About Exodus 21</b>
Introduction	<b>The Prequel of Exodus 21</b>
Introduction	
Introduction	<b>The Principals of Exodus 21</b>
Introduction	<b>The Places of Exodus 21</b>
Introduction	<b>By the Numbers</b>
Introduction	<b>Timeline for Exodus 21</b>
Introduction	<b>A Synopsis of Exodus 21</b>

<sup>1</sup> From <http://www.biblesummary.info/exodus> accessed December 24, 2019.

Introduction	<b>Outlines of Exodus 21</b> (Various Commentators)
Introduction	<b>A Synopsis of Exodus 21 from the Summarized Bible</b>
Introduction	<b>The Big Picture (Exodus 20–23)</b>
Introduction	
Introduction	<b>Changes—additions and subtractions (for Exodus 21)</b>
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v. 1	<b>An Overview of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy</b>
v. 2	<b>Slavery in Israel</b>
v. 4	<b>What if the Master Gives a Slave a Wife?</b>
v. 6	<b>An Awl</b> (a graphic)
v. 10	<b>Links to Doctrines on Marriage</b>
v. 12	<b>What does the Bible say about capital punishment?</b> (From Got Questions)
v. 12	<b>Capital Crimes in the Old Testament</b> (Dave Miller)
v. 12	<b>The Bible and Capital Punishment</b> (by Gregory Koukl)
v. 12	<b>CAPITAL PUNISHMENT What Does the Bible Teach on this Vital Subject?</b> (By George Zeller)
v. 16	<b>Moses could have banned...</b> (a meme)
v. 20	<b>Ancient Slavery Codes</b>
v. 22	<b>Abortion</b>
v. 23	<b>Abbreviated Review of Exodus 21:22–25</b>
v.	
v.	
v. 27	<b>The Abbreviated Doctrine of Slavery</b>
v. 33	<b>Ancient Pre-Christian Era Well</b> (a graphic)
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Summary	<b>A Brief Review of Exodus 21</b>
Summary	<b>A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary</b>
Summary	<b>Why Exodus 21 is in the Word of God</b>
Summary	<b>What We Learn from Exodus 21</b>
Summary	<b>Jesus Christ in Exodus 21</b>
Summary	<b>Shmoop Summary of Exodus 21</b>
Summary	<b>Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 21</b>
Summary	
Addendum	<b>The Mosaic Law</b> (by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
Addendum	<b>What does the Bible say about abortion?</b> (From Got Questions)
Addendum	<b>Jesus on “An eye for an eye.”</b>
Addendum	
Addendum	<b>Josephus’ History of this Time Period</b>
Addendum	<b>A Complete Translation of Exodus 21</b>
Addendum	<b>Doctrinal Teachers Who Have Taught Exodus 21</b>
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<a href="#">Introduction and Text</a>	<a href="#">First Verse</a>	<a href="#">Addendum</a>
<a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a>	<a href="#">Exodus folder</a>	<a href="#">Exegetical Studies in Exodus</a>

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
	<a href="#">Kinsman-Redeemer</a>		
Additional doctrines and links are found in <a href="#">Definition of Terms</a> below.			

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			
	<a href="#">Genesis 24</a>		

Many who read and study this chapter are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Often, the terms below are linked to complete doctrines.

Definition of Terms	
<b>Bible Doctrine</b>	Bible doctrine is the information found in the Old and New Testaments which God wants all believers to know. We live in the Church Age, where there is no additional Scripture being written; and therefore, there is no direct teaching by God to man. All that we need to know is found within the pages of the Bible. See the <b>Importance of Bible Doctrine</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Christian</b>	For the purposes of these studies, a Christian is anyone who has believed in Jesus Christ.
<b>The Christian Life; the Christian Way of Life</b>	The <i>Christian life</i> is a synonym for the spiritual life. Key to the Christian life is faith in Christ; naming of one's sins to God (rebound), and growing by means of Bible doctrine. See the <b>Doctrine of Walking</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ); <b>Christian Basics</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ), the <b>Spiritual Life in the Church Age</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ) and The <b>Basic Mechanics of the Christian Life</b> (also known as, <b>The Christian Life for Dummies</b> ) ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>(The) Church ; Local Church</b>	The church has several different meanings today: (1) Most often, today, we understand <i>church</i> to refer to a local church that we attend. (2) At the beginning of the Church Age, this word referred to a gathering or assembly of people; their racial and gender specifics were irrelevant to their position in Christ. (3) The <i>church universal</i> refers to all of the believers (this could be all of the believers alive on earth right now or all of the believers who have lived throughout the Church Age). Grace notes "Church, the Body of Christ" ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ); Doctrine.org ( <a href="#">The Church—the Body of Christ</a> ); Word of Truth Ministries ( <a href="#">Church</a> ); Grace Bible Church of Baytown ( <a href="#">The Church</a> );

Definition of Terms	
<b>Divine Establishment</b>	Also known as the <i>laws of divine establishment</i> . These are laws which are devised by God for the human race (for believers and unbelievers alike). The more aligned a country is with these laws, the greater freedom and prosperity that country will enjoy. Furthermore, there will be greater evangelism and Bible teaching which takes place. The further a country strays from these law results in greater tyranny and unhappiness among its population. See the <b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Divine institutions</b>	A <i>divine institution</i> is an absolute social structure instituted by God for the entire human race—for believers and unbelievers alike. The term <i>divine</i> emphasizes the fact that they have their origin in God. These are social structures that have been built into creation and into the nature of man by God. These are (1) the volitional function of the human soul; (2) work; (3) marriage; (4) family; and (5) human government. These divine institutions provide protection, perpetuation, orderly function, survival and blessing of the human race, and allow for the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> For more information, see <b>Divine Institutions</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Hebrew v. Jew</b>	<i>Hebrew</i> is an Old Testament designation of the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <i>Jew</i> is a later term, referring to the same people, which has its origins in the name <i>Judæa</i> . I primarily use the first term in OT studies and the second terms in NT studies (and for current references to the same people).
<b>Israel</b>	Israel can refer to a number of different things: (1) <i>Israel</i> is the name given to Jacob; and sometimes, these two names contrast his character and spiritual growth. (2) <i>Israel</i> can refer to the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (3) <i>Israel</i> can refer to the nation made up of the people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (4) <i>Israel</i> can refer specifically to the northern kingdom, after the nation under Solomon split into a northern and southern nation (the southern nation being called <i>Judah</i> ). Context determines which thing is meant.
<b>Jew, Jews, Jewish</b>	Genetically, Jews are those with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Religiously, those who follow the faith of Abraham (and today, those who follow a distorted version of the faith of Moses). Hebrew is the term used in the Old Testament; Jew/Jewish is used in the New. See <b>Jews, Gentiles and Christians</b> ; <b>Jewish Civilization</b> ; <b>The Jewish Religious Systems</b> ; <b>The Jews and Hellenism</b> ; <b>Jews and Judaism</b> ; and <b>Jews and Gentiles in Bible Times</b> .
<b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b>	Since the world appears to be made up of mostly unbelievers, God must have some kind of plan for the unbelievers while they are alive. These are called the laws of divine establishment, and they are applicable to both believers and unbelievers. These are the laws which protect the freedom of a nation, and allow for evangelism and for the teaching of the Word of God. See the <b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Mental Attitude Sins</b>	These sins would include arrogance, pride, jealousy, implacability, bitterness, vindictiveness, inordinate ambition and inordinate competition, all motivational sins, and sinful thoughts such as fear, guilt, worry, anger, judging, hatred. See the <b>Doctrine of Mental Attitude Sins</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).

<sup>2</sup> A portion of this definition comes from: <http://www.phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen026.htm>

Definition of Terms	
<b>The Mosaic Law the Law of Moses</b>	<p>The Mosaic Law is the Law which God gave orally to Moses, which Moses wrote down. It is found at the beginning of Exodus 20 and continues through the book of Numbers (with some narrative integrated into the text of the Law). The book of Deuteronomy summarizes and reviews much of the Mosaic Law and adds in some additional applications (Deuteronomy is actually a series of sermons given by Moses to the people of Israel—Moses himself wrote these sermons).</p> <p>Often the words <i>the Law</i> refer back to the books specifically written by Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). See also (the Spokane Bible Church on the <a href="#">Mosaic Law</a>.) (Maranatha Church on the <a href="#">Mosaic Law</a>); <a href="#">Grace Notes</a>.</p>
<b>Pastor, Pastor- teacher</b>	<p>The pastor (or pastor-teacher) is the highest spiritual gift with regards to authority. He has the authority over a single church. He is given one level of authority when he is called by the church into service; and then he develops a higher level of authority by teaching the Word of God. This is not, however, the authority to run the lives of individuals at the church. The pastor can teach the Word of God with near complete accuracy, yet members of his congregation might do the exact opposite. <a href="#">Grace Notes' Pastor-Teachers in the Church Age</a> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>); Jack Ballinger (<a href="#">Pastor-teacher</a>); Roy Cloudt (<a href="#">pastor-teacher</a>).</p>
<b>Pentateuch</b>	<p>The Pentateuch is comprised of the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), incorrectly called the first five books of Moses (as Moses did not write Genesis).</p>
<b>Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)</b>	<p>In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the <b>Doctrine of Rebound</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<b>Religion, Religious</b>	<p>Strictly speaking, <i>religion</i> is man attempting to earn God's approbation through man's efforts, works and/or piety. This is the basis of all religions. <i>Christianity</i> is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We are saved because we stand upon the merit of Jesus Christ; not because of any good thing in us. See the <b>Doctrine of Religion</b> (<a href="#">Philip. 1:21</a>) (<a href="#">Chart from Middletown Bible Church</a>) (<a href="#">Christian Ministries International</a>).</p>
<b>Scar tissue</b>	<p>Scar tissue is what develops on the soul as a result of negative volition toward God and/or Bible Doctrine. The heart becomes hardened toward God. Tyree uses the term <i>soul cauterization</i>. See (<a href="#">Bible News</a>) (<a href="#">Robert R. McLaughlin</a>) (<a href="#">Makarios</a>) (<a href="#">Grace Notes</a>).</p>
<b>Spiritual Growth</b>	<p>Spiritual growth for the believer is an option. We do not automatically grow spiritually simply because we have believed in Jesus Christ. We grow because we spend time in the Spirit (using rebound) and because we learn Bible doctrine under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor-teacher. See <b>Living the Christian Life</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>); <b>Christian Mechanics</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>), the <b>Stages of Spiritual Growth</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>); and <b>the Spiritual Life</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>



Some of these definitions are taken from

<http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/>

<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>

<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/>

<http://www.theopedia.com/>

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### An Introduction to Exodus 21

**Introduction:** With Exodus 21, we begin the study of the various laws which God gave to Israel. Now, the purpose of this study is not to put us under the **Law of Moses**. **Christians** are not called in every country to impose these laws in their country. There are no significant **religious** movements by **Jews** or Christians to make the **Mosaic Law** Code the law of any country. Although many people in Israel hold, to some degree or another, to the Ten Commandments; this country did not place itself under the myriad of law that we will study. The Mosaic Law was designed for Israel as a nation under God during the Age of Israel (circa 2100 B.C. to 5 B.C.<sup>3</sup>).

We will attempt to understand the laws given to Israel and to better understand the God Who gave them these laws. We will receive sets of laws similar to these, but spread out in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, these laws come directly from God. However, in Deuteronomy, these laws and applications will come directly from Moses.

Whereas, the Ten Commandments are essentially universal laws which work in any society in any age, these other laws are very specifically written for this point in time in human history, to be followed in nation Israel. Now, if during this time, other nations copied Israel, then they would have enjoyed great blessing as well.

A society, in any era, which seeks to codify the Ten Commandments as fundamental law principles, will be prospered and blessed. On the other hand, when it comes to the additional 600+ laws laid out in the books of Moses, there are very important principles to learn, digest and apply; but this does not mean that all of these laws are appropriate to our society as written.

Unless you are unduly influenced by liberalism, you understand that the United States is one of the greatest, freest and most prosperous nations of all time (if not the greatest and the most free). So much of that is tied directly to God and all that God has done on our behalf; and to the fact that so many people in the United States have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, a significant number of Americans (not enough) are growing in grace and doctrine, just as Jesus did in His humanity (Luke 2:40, 52) and just as Peter encouraged believers of his era to do in 2Peter 3:18.

Any nation today could look at the United States, at our government, at our founding; and study the principles associated with our founding. And then try to duplicate it. There is a lot to love about the United States Constitution; but, if another nation tried to duplicate our nation apart from the spiritual factor (which cannot be imposed), then there would be some blessing to come to that country. However, the greatness of our government comes from spiritual factor, which we may want to consider as the DNA of our founding as a country. If a nation desires blessing and freedom, the key is always the spiritual factor. You get the spiritual factor right, and everything else will fall into place. And to be clear on this, a very strong Catholic influence is not the correct spiritual factor. Many Catholics have believed in Jesus Christ and depend solely upon Him for salvation. That makes a Catholic a believer. However, there is not enough accurate spiritual information being taught in the Catholic Church to guide Catholics to spiritual maturity. The chief problems which come to mind regarding the

<sup>3</sup> If you consider the life of Jesus Christ to be a separate dispensation.

Catholic Church is their emphasis upon Mary worship and encouraged interactions with dead *saints*,<sup>4</sup> Apostolic succession leading to the pope, a specialized priesthood, and a weird obsession with celibacy (they even believe Mary to be celibate and claim that the half-brothers and sisters<sup>5</sup> to Jesus are all from Joseph and a previous marriage).

This does not mean that all Protestant churches are hotbeds of **spiritual growth**. Most of them are not. A **church** which provides three separate teaching sessions a week is not going to even keep its congregation above water (spiritually speaking). If there are not other options for spiritual growth available, believers in the typical Protestant church are simply not going to advance. A church with limited teaching sessions each week (and teaching even three sessions a week can be difficult for a **pastor** to do), a church must develop some sort of plan for their congregation to advance spiritually. And so there is no misunderstanding, no one grows from a praise and worship service. Let's set this topic aside for a time.

There are great and wonderful principles found in our Constitution, which is very much a **divine establishment** product. A nation which reflects similar principles will be strong and prosperous; but divine blessing comes specifically to a nation with many believers and many growing believers.

When Israel believed most strongly in God and followed divine precepts and kept God's laws and commandments, Israel prospered. When people rejected God—His Word or His prophets (who presented His Word to them)—then Israel faced God's discipline. A rejection of God's Word by Israelites meant more problems and less happiness.

In the era that this was written (Moses writing down the very words of God), this was studied and adhered to. These were the laws of the land. These were very relevant to a well-ordered life. These laws provided maximum freedom and maximum blessing to nation Israel, if followed.

The Bible student today is going to have a different reaction when it comes to studying these laws. First off, let me assure you that God does not want Christians (or Jews) to gather into groups here or there in the world and reestablish a city or a nation which adheres to the laws found in these final chapters of Exodus. Whereas, there is a **religion** in existence today which wants its people to adhere to a very specific law code written more than a millennium ago, this is not what we will get from studying this chapter.

On the other hand, do not so quickly cast this and similar chapters aside, finding fault with some of the recorded laws because you do not think anyone should own a slave at any time for any reason. There are degrees of slavery and various types of slavery. Furthermore, there are more slaves today than during the time of Moses. Furthermore, many people (including myself) would consider those born into communism slaves of the state. That point of view places a third of the world under slavery (which should also give you a clue as to the power and influence of Satan on this earth).

It is rather incongruous to absolutely hate the slavery found in American 200 years ago, and yet embrace socialism or communism, which is also a form of slavery. It makes no sense to pull down a statue of a slave holder, and yet favor a statue of Marx or Lenin being put up in its place. How do you vociferously reject the slavery of a few people, but be in favor of a nation where 90% of the people are enslaved by a communist government?

In any case, Exodus is not a book of completely outdated laws and regulations. Try to understand what these laws meant to the people and how they understood them and applied them to their culture; then try to take from these laws and understand how they might be pertinent to life today. The better that you understand the time and place of these laws, the better you understand what they mean to us today.

Now, you cannot say, "God, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow" and then conclude "Therefore, the Mosaic Law applies word-for-word to us today." Why not? The Bible is very specific that the Law was given to the ancient

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<sup>4</sup> I italicize this word because all believers are saints. In the Catholic Church, a very small subset of them are considered to be *saints*.

<sup>5</sup> Meaning that they would actually be step-brothers and step-sisters, according to Catholic doctrine.





It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Exodus 21

Exodus 21 will begin with

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Exodus 21

Characters

Commentary


Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We need to know where this chapter takes place.

The Places of Exodus 21

Place

Description


Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

By the Numbers

Item

Duration; size


By the Numbers	
Item	Duration; size
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

## Timeline for Exodus 21

Legend
Birth or death
God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)
Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.
The entire <b>Abrahamic Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
The entire <b>Patriarchal Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
Much of the commentary on the far right came from others' works (like Brent MacDonald).

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1805 B.C.	1806 B.C.		1606 B.C.	Gen. 50:26 Exodus 6:1	Joseph dies at age 110
			1625 B.C. (1620 B.C.)	Num. 26:58	Birth of Amram (Levi's grandson, Moses' father).
			1590 B.C. (1584 B.C.)		The death of Levi (age 137)
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.					
			1606–1462 B.C.	Gen. 47:27 Exodus 1:7	From the Patriarchs to the Exodus.
1783 B.C.	1656 B.C.				Hyksos begin ruling in Egypt (Semite kings).
	1556 B.C.				Defeat of Hyksos dynasty
1570 B.C.	1557–1532 B.C.				Ahmose reign (wife Nefertiri); beginning of the 18 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty in Egypt.
1546 B.C.	1532–1511 B.C.				Amuntotep reign

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
			1580 B.C. (1542 B.C.)	Exodus 1:8–14	Egyptian bondage and oppression increases.
	1526 B.C.				Amuntotep kills children
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.	0		Exodus 2:2	Birth of Moses
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.			Exodus 2:5	Hatshepsut, age 15, adopts baby Moses.
1526 B.C.	1511–1498 B.C.				Thutmose I reign (wife Ahmose)
1514 B.C.	1498–1485 B.C.				Thutmose II – Hatshepsut (his half-sister and co-ruler) Pharaohs of Oppression
1504 B.C.					Hatshepsut continues reign with Thutmose III
	1466 B.C.			Num. 11:29 Ex. 33:11	Birth of Joshua
1482 B.C.				Exodus 2:11-15 Acts 7:23	Moses flees to Midian to escape the wrath of Thutmose III. Pharaoh Thutmose III now rules Egypt alone, subsequently destroying most traces of Hatshepsut.
1450 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep II (alt. Amenophis II). He was not the oldest son of Thutmose III. Bloodthirsty; liked hand to hand combat, led troops into battle with howls of rage.
1446 B.C.				Ex. 4:18-5:1 1Kings 6:1	Egypt - Moses returns and confronts Amenhotep II.
1446 B.C.	1446 B.C.			Ex. 12:40-41	Moses leads people out of Egypt; the beginning of the exodus. <b>note 3</b> . Scripture does not state that Pharaoh was killed at this time (read about it <a href="#">here</a> ).

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
					Sinai (Marah, Elim, Rephidim, Mount Sinai, etc.) - Israel in wilderness 40 years (Exodus 16:35). A timeline of stops on the Exodus is <a href="#">here</a> .
1424 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Thutmose IV (alt. Tuthmosis IV) reigns, son of Amenhotep II and lesser wife Tiaa. He was not the oldest son. Had dream at the sphinx that he would rule - recorded on stele there.
1414 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep III (alt. Amenophis III). The colossi of Memnon are all that remains of his temple near Thebes.
1402 B.C.				Deut. 1:1, 5	Israel - Moses writes and teaches the book of Deuteronomy in land of Moab.
1402 B.C.		120		Deut. 34:7	Moses dies at Mount Nebo at 120 years old
	1406 B.C.				Joshua crosses Jordan River.
1401 B.C.					Israel - Conquests of Joshua in Promised Land begin. Battle of Jericho.

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed January 29, 2016.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

Steve Rudd from <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-1440bc.jpg> accessed January 29, 2016.

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Exodus 21:

### A Synopsis of Exodus 21

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Outlines of Exodus 21 (Various Commentators)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 21:1-36

### A Synopsis of Exodus 21 from the Summarized Bible

<b>Contents:</b>	Laws concerning servants. Injuries to the person.
<b>Characters:</b>	God, Moses.
<b>Conclusion:</b>	The great God of heaven stoops to take interest in the detail affairs between man and man and makes regulations even as to the loss of a tooth.
<b>Key Word:</b>	Judgments, Exodus 21:1.
<b>Strong Verses:</b>	Exodus 21:12.
<b>Striking Facts:</b>	God who gives and maintains life, by His law would protect it.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Ex. 21.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It is helpful to see what came before and what follows in a brief summary.



## The Big Picture (Exodus 20–23)

Chapter	Summary
<b>Exodus 20</b>	<p>God speaks the Ten Commandments to all the people of Israel; and it really shakes them up. They ask Moses to speak to God directly and then to tell them what God says. They do not want to hear God speaking directly to them.</p> <p>The people pull back away from the mountain, and Moses goes towards the mountain to the thick darkness where God is. God speaks to Moses about idols and altars (which appears to continue into Exodus 21–23 for other topics).</p>
Apart from the Ten Commandments, most of the moral laws are given in Exodus 21–23.	
<b>Exodus 21</b>	God gives laws about slavery, personal injury and homicide. These laws include actions by animals (the guilty party is the owner of the animal).
<b>Exodus 22</b>	Laws on theft and a set of general property rights and laws. This chapter includes a wide variety of laws on illicit sexual activity, worship of another God, mistreatment of widows and orphans, loan conditions and restrictions, and consecration of the firstborn.
<b>Exodus 23</b>	<p>Laws on giving truthful testimony, the keeping of the Sabbath and Sabbatical years; and the three major festivals are described.</p> <p>God promises to help the Israelites enter into the land of Canaan to take it.</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>Chapter Outline</span> <span>Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</span> </div>	

**Changes—additions and subtractions (for Exodus 21):** Very often, when I begin a new chapter, I have either discovered a new translations, a new commentary; or have decided to leave out a particular translation or commentary. Sometimes, I make a minor formatting change. I have always placed such comments before the beginning of the first verse. So one formatting change is, *the addition of this more formal approach to changes, giving it a section of its own*. Many times, if I like a change a lot, I will occasionally go back and make that change in previous chapters.

Previously in the weekly study of Genesis, I used the Modern KJV translation (this is the second set of original notes placed in the chapter-by-chapter study of Genesis). For the book of Exodus, I will use the New King James Version (unless otherwise noted), which is a superior (but not perfect) translation. Therefore, an unnamed translation of Exodus will either be the NKJV or it will be one of the three original translations developed for each chapter.

I have gone back in the Exodus series and made certain that, after every verse, there is a mostly literal translation of that verse. At the end of every passage, there will be both a mostly literal translation and a paraphrase provided, both clearly marked and original with me.

The Doctrinal Dictionary now allows you to go back and forth between the first occurrence of a specific term and the dictionary where its definition is found (they are now cross-linked).

From this point forward, through the next 3 chapters, are a set of regulations or judicial decisions which God will make. Logically, these are based upon the principles of the Ten Commandments.

The next 11 chapters (Exodus 21–31) are going to be devoted to laws for nation Israel. Moses will be gone for a very long time while he writes these laws down. Exodus 20:22–23:33 are given all at once, apparently at one sitting.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We have begun Exodus 21, which is a continuation of a few verses at the end of Exodus 20. This chapter should have begun with Exodus 20:22, which reads: **And the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven. (ESV)** Some of the laws were given at the end of Exodus 20, and they are continued in Exodus 21. These *laws* are called the *judgements*.

This sentence introduces chapters 21–23, which is a series of laws and regulations. Many would begin this section with Exodus 20:21 or 22 (Exodus 20:22–26 are laws regarding the worship of God).

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

## The Regulation of Slavery

Kukis slavishly literal:

Kukis moderately literal:

**And these [are] the judgements which you will set to their faces:...** Exodus 21:1

**Now these [are] the judgments [or, *judicial decisions*] that you will place before them:...**

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

**Now these are the judgments that you will place before the sons of Israel:...**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac (= Aramaic) and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>6</sup>; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes

<sup>6</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

The comparisons which I do are primarily between the English translations which are taken from the ancient tongues. For the most part, the variances are so minor that I rarely investigate them any further than that.

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From [http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos\\_Exodus.html](http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_Exodus.html) and first published in 1862.

Occasionally, there is an obvious error in the English translation, and I correct those without additional mention or footnoting. For instance, the online version of the Targum of Onkelos which I use has *gorund* in Ex. 4:9; I simply corrected the text. This may occur once or twice in a chapter.

I attempt to include translations which are different in their vocabulary and phrasing. On many occasions, I may include a translation which is not substantially different than another listed translation.

Most of the translations can be found [here](#).

The very fact that we have ancient Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic translations of the Bible testifies to its accuracy. There may be a difference word or phrase here or there; the Greek may have a singular where the Hebrew has a plural, but there is no set of doctrines in the Latin Bible which are any different from those found in the Greek Bible or the Syriac Bible. These different cultures when they chose to

translate the Bible chose to translate it as accurately as possible. Where human viewpoint would expect to find doctrinal differences between the Bible of the Hebrews, of the Greeks or of the Romans, no such differences exist.

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And these [are] the judgements which you will set to their faces:...
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	MISHPATIM. AND these are the judgments which thou shalt set In order before them. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	MISHPATIM. AND these are the orders of judgments which thou shalt order before them.
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims <sup>7</sup>	These are the judgments which you shall set before them.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	NOW these are the judgments which you shall set before them.
Updated Brenton (Greek) <sup>8</sup>	And these are the ordinances which thou shalt set before them.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:<sup>9</sup>

Bible in Basic English	.
Easy English	<b>Israelite slaves</b> These are the laws that you must put in front of the Israelites:...
Easy-to-Read Version–2003	{Then God said to Moses,} "These are the other laws that you will give to the people:...
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Other Laws and Commands Then God said to Moses, "These are the other laws that you will give to the people:...
God's Word™	Laws Concerning the Treatment of Slaves The Lord continued, "Here are the legal decisions to be used by the Israelites:...
The Message	.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	Other Laws "Here are the laws you must explain to the people of Israel.
New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The LORD gave Moses the following laws for his people:...
The Living Bible	"Here are other laws you must obey:...
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	Laws about Servants "Now these are the Laws which you are to give them.

<sup>7</sup> Also known as the 'you' version; found here: <http://www.cormacburke.or.ke/node/1054>

<sup>8</sup> I am using the Complete Apostles Bible, available through e-sword.

<sup>9</sup> Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

New Living Translation	<b>Fair Treatment of Slaves</b> "These are the regulations you must present to Israel.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	"Here are some other instructions to give to the Israelite people.
Unfolding Bible (simplified) <sup>10</sup>	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'Now, these are the Laws that you are to show to them:...
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	<b>Instructions about slaves</b> These are the case laws that you should set before them:...
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And these laws, he said, thou shalt promulgate to them.[1] [1] The code of laws which occupies this and the two following chapters was known as the Book of the Covenant.
Translation for Translators	<b>Instructions for treating slaves</b> "Here are some <i>other</i> instructions to give to <i>the Israeli</i> people:...

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	Now these are the laws that you will give them to live under. Literally, "these are the judgments you shall place before their faces."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<b>The Law of Social Life.</b> Now these are the decrees which you shall put before them :...
God's Truth (Tyndale)	These are the laws which you shall set before you.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	<b>Laws Concerning Servants</b> "These are the ordinances that you are to set before them.
Jubilee Bible 2000	Now these <i>are</i> the rights which thou shalt set before them.
Lexham English Bible	<b>Regulations Regarding Hebrew Slaves</b> "And these are the regulations that you will set before them.
NIV, ©2011	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text <sup>11</sup>	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	"Now these are the decrees that you must set before them:...
Urim-Thummim Version	Now these are the ordinances that you will establish for them.
Wikipedia Bible Project	.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And these <i>are</i> the judgments which you shall put before their face.
New American Bible (2002) <sup>12</sup>	"These are the rules you shall lay before them. Rules: judicial precedents to be used in settling questions of law and custom. This introductory phrase serves as the title of the following collection of civil and religious laws (Exodus 21-23) which is called in ⇒ Exodus 24:7, the book of the covenant.
New English Bible—1970	<b>Treatment of Slaves.</b> These are the laws you shall set before them:...
New Jerusalem Bible	'These are the laws you must give them:...
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

<sup>10</sup> Access via <https://marvel.bible/index.php?text=MIB&b=2&c=9&v=7>

<sup>11</sup> Access via <https://marvel.bible/index.php?text=MIB&b=2&c=9&v=7>

<sup>12</sup> Found here: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM)

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	<b>Parashah 18: Mishpatim (Rulings) 21:1–24:18</b>
exeGesés companion Bible	“These are the rulings you are to present to them:...” <b>JUDGMENTS FOR SERVANTS</b> Now set these judgments at their face:...
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	.
	<i>Laws: The Hebrew Slave</i> These are the laws that you must set before [the Israelites]:... The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	“These are the right-rulings which you are to set before them:...”
Tree of Life Version	<b>Parashat Mishpatim</b> Ordinances for the Covenant “Now these are the ordinances which you will set before them.

**Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:**

Alpha & Omega Bible	<b>AND THESE ARE THE ORDINANCES WHICH YOU SHALL SET BEFORE THEM.</b> †(Ordinances: G1345, This word refers to temporary old covenant ordinances, done away by the New Covenant Blood & Body of JESUS The Christ. The Ten Commandments, 7th Day Commanded Rest & Assembly, and the annual Festivals/Holy Days are Laws established from creation UNTIL the next recreation of the New universe/heavens & New Earth, NOT temporary ordinances. See Exo_12:43, Mat_5:17 to Mat_5:48. The "laws" that Paul preached about being done away with are NOT really laws but should be translated as ordinances. He correctly preached against old covenant ordinances. But he did NOT preach against the Ten Commandments, 7th Day Rest & annual Festivals days or tithes. Paul observed The Law of JESUS).
Awful Scroll Bible	The judgments you was to place turned before them are:...
Charles Thomson OT	.
Concordant Literal Version	Now these are the judgments which you shall place before them.
Darby Translation (1889)	.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<b>[MISHPATIM]</b> Now these are the mishpatim which thou shalt set before them.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	Now, these are the regulations which thou shalt put before them.
Third Millennium Bible	.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<b>Ordinances for the People</b> “Now these are the ordinances (laws) which you shall set before the Israelites:...”
The Expanded Bible	<b>Laws for Living</b> Then God said to Moses, “These are the laws for living [regulations] that you will give to the Israelites [ <sup>L</sup> set before them]:...”
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 1-11</b> Precepts Regulating the Master's Relation to Slaves



Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. These were special ordinances concerning the political commonwealth of the Jews. In the New Testament God's revelation is no longer confined to one single people, and we no longer have any state under the direct government of God. And yet, also these ordinances were recorded for our learning, especially for the purpose of teaching us various applications of the law of love.

Syndein/Thieme

The Voice

After God gives Israel the Ten Directives, He gives them other instructions that derive from the first ten. They do not cover every situation but provide guidance for how God's people should live.

**Eternal One (to Moses):** These are other rules and guiding principles that you must present to the Israelites:...

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach<sup>13</sup>

And these are the ordinances that you shall set before them.

**And these are the ordinances:** Wherever it says, "these" [in the Torah,] it [(this word) is used to] separate from what has been stated previously. [Where it says,] "And these," [it means that] it is adding to what has been previously stated (Tanchuma Mishpatim 3). [Thus] just as what has been previously stated [namely the Ten Commandments,] were from Sinai, these too were from Sinai. Now why was the section dealing with laws juxtaposed to the section dealing with the altar? To tell you that you shall place the Sanhedrin adjacent to the Beth Hamikdash (other editions: the altar). — [From Mechilta]

**that you shall set before them:** The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moses: Do not think of saying, "I will teach them the chapter or the law [both terms seemingly refer to the Oral Torah] two or three times until they know it well, as it was taught, but I will not trouble myself to enable them to understand the reasons for the matter and its explanation." Therefore, it is said: "you shall set before them," like a table, set [with food] and prepared to eat from, [placed] before someone. — [From Mechilta, Eruvin 54b]

**before them:** But not before gentiles. Even if you know that they [gentiles] judge a certain law similarly to the laws of Israel, do not bring it to their courts, for one who brings Jewish lawsuits before gentiles profanes the [Divine] Name and honors the name of idols to praise them (other editions: to give them importance), as it is said: "For not like our Rock [God] is their rock, but [yet] our enemies judge [us]" (Deut. 32:31). When [we let] our enemies judge [us], this is testimony to [our] esteem of their deity. — [From Tanchuma 3]

The Geneva Bible  
Kaplan Translation  
NET Bible®

.

*The Decisions*

"These are the decisions that you will set before them:..."

<sup>13n</sup> There follows now a series of rulings called "the decisions" or "the judgments" (מִשְׁפָּטִים, hammishpatim). A precept is stated, and then various cases in which the law is applicable are examined. These rulings are all in harmony with the Decalogue that has just been given and can be grouped into three categories: civil or criminal laws, religious or cultic laws, and moral or humanitarian laws. The civil and criminal laws make up most of chap. 21; the next two chapters mix the other kinds of laws. Among the many studies of this section of the book are F. C. Fensham, "The Role of the Lord in the Legal Sections of the Covenant Code," VT 26 (1976): 262-74; S. Paul, "Unrecognized Biblical Legal Idioms in Light of Comparative

<sup>13</sup> Also known as the Complete Tanach (and as *The Complete Jewish Bible*) with Rashi's Commentary. I do not know who did the original translation, but it has been edited by translator and scholar, Rabbi A.J. Rosenberg. It is found [here](#).

Akkadian Expressions,” RB 86 (1979): 231-39; M. Galston, “The Purpose of the Law According to Maimonides,” JQR 69 (1978): 27-51.

New American Bible (2011)<sup>14</sup>

*Laws Regarding Slaves.*

*These are the ordinances\* you shall lay before them.*

\* [21:1] **Ordinances:** judicial precedents to be used in settling questions of law and custom. More than half of the civil and religious laws in this collection (20:22–23:33), designated in 24:7 as “the book of the covenant,” have parallels in the cuneiform laws of the ancient Near East. It is clear that Israel participated in a common legal culture with its neighbors.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and these are the decisions which you will place <in front of> them,...

C. Thompson LXX (updated) And these are the rules of rectitude which thou shalt set before them.

Context Group Version .

English Standard Version **Laws About Slaves**

“Now these are the rules that you shall set before them.

Green’s Literal Translation And these are the judgments which you shall put before them:...

Modern English Version **The Law About Servants**

Now these are the judgments which you will set before them.

Modern Literal Version .

New European Version **Regulations about Servants**

Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them.

New King James Version **The Law Concerning Servants**

“Now these are the judgments [ordinances] which you shall set before them:...

Niobi Study Bible .

Owen’s Translation .

Restored Holy Bible 6.0 .

Updated Bible Version 2.11 .

A Voice in the Wilderness .

Webster’s Bible Translation .

World English Bible .

Young’s Literal Translation .

Young’s Updated LT “Now these are the judgments which you will set before them:...

**The gist of this passage:** The is the introductory sentence to the next 3 chapters.

## Exodus 21:1

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
’êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	these, these things; they	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong’s #428 BDB #41

<sup>14</sup> Also called the revised edition. Found here: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>

## Exodus 21:1

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mîsh <sup>e</sup> pâṭîym (מִשְׁפָּטִים) [pronounced <i>mish<sup>e</sup>-paw-TEEM</i> ]	<i>laws; judgements; appeals; responsibilities; privileges; customs; justice; verdicts rendered by a judge, judicial decisions, judicial sentences</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
sîym (שִׁימ) [pronounced <i>seem</i> ]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i> ]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *before them, before their faces, in their presence, in their sight, in front of them.*

Together, they mean *before him, before his face, in his presence, in his sight, in front of him.* Literally, this reads *to his faces.*

**Translation:** Now these [are] the judgments [or, judicial decisions] that you will place before them:...

One of the more common words in the **Pentateuch** is the word mîsh<sup>e</sup>pâṭîym (מִשְׁפָּטִים) [pronounced *mish<sup>e</sup>-paw-TEEM*] and it is generally translated *laws, ordinances, judgements*. This is the word found here and translated *judgments*. *The Emphasized Bible* gives the possible translation *divine applications of law to actual life*.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes, a one-word translation is just not enough to convey what is here (although Rotherham gives the one-word translation *rules* and then footnotes this as *regulations*).<sup>16</sup> I prefer the translation *judgment (s), verdict (s) or judicial decision (s)*. Strong's #4941 BDB #1048.

What we are studying are the specifics and the applications of the Ten Commandments. This set of laws (or ordinances or judgments) carry with them punishments and the *what if's*.

In this verse, God is continuing His conversation with Moses; Moses is possibly taking dictation at this point (or, he simply carries this material in his mind for a period of time and speaks them to his secretary, Joshua). These words of God were written in **the** book, alluded to in Exodus 17:14 (see also Exodus 34:27 Deuteronomy 31:9 Joshua 4:7).

Exodus 21:1 Now these [are] the judgments [or, judicial decisions] that you will place before them:... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

<sup>15</sup> See [http://kukis.org/Translations/Emphasised\\_Bible.pdf](http://kukis.org/Translations/Emphasised_Bible.pdf) (footnote for Exodus 21:1).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

What I find remarkable are the differences between the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are very different books which provide, at the same time, a very consistent history of nation Israel in its beginning.

### An Overview of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

1. Exodus
  - 1) Although the book of Exodus provides the entire history of Moses' from age 0 to age 81, the book of Exodus primarily covers a period of a year to a year and a half.
  - 2) Moses ages from 0 to 80 in Exodus 1–2.
  - 3) Moses, led by God, leads the people of Israel out of Egypt. Exodus 3–15
  - 4) God gives the people the Law from Mount Sinai. Exodus 16–31
  - 5) An historical account of the rebellion of the people of Israel and Moses presents the people with a second set of tablets of the Law. Exodus 32–34
  - 6) The people participate in various ways to build the Tabernacle of God. Exodus 35–40
  - 7) The Tabernacle is erected on the first day of the first month (Exodus 40:1), so that puts us at exact one year out from the exodus itself.
2. Leviticus
  - 1) The book of Leviticus is nearly all Law. God speaks to Moses (or to Moses and Aaron), and these laws are passed along to Israel. Everyone heard the Ten Commandments, but after that, God spoke specifically to Moses (or to Moses and Aaron) and they would convey these words to the people.
  - 2) The time period for Leviticus is about one year. It picks up after the completion of the Tabernacle (see Exodus 40) whereas the book of Numbers begins two years and two months since Israel exited Egypt.
  - 3) There are only a few chapters in Leviticus which are strictly narrative.
3. Numbers
  - 1) The book of Numbers takes us from the second year post-Egypt to year 39.
  - 2) Although many commands from God are given, the nature of the time period indicates that there will be a lot of narrative in Numbers.
  - 3) Gen X dies out in the book of Numbers and the generation of promise replaces them.
    - (1) Gen X are the Hebrew people who age 20 or older at the exodus.
    - (2) The generation of promise are the Hebrew people age 20 or younger at the time of the exodus. This includes those born in the desert during the 40 years between the exodus and Moses' death.
4. Deuteronomy
  - 1) Deuteronomy is a set of sermons given by Moses in the last few months before Israel invades Canaan (which is the book of Joshua).
  - 2) What is very unusual about this book is, up to this point in time, God would speak and then Moses would repeat verbatim the words of God. At this point, based upon his understanding of the Law and his experience with the Hebrew people, Moses speaks to Israel about their history with God, the giving of the Law, and how the law should be applied. He also encourages them in the next chapter of their lives (which is the book of Joshua).
  - 3) What Moses writes and then speaks (and maybe he simply spoke without any notes) becomes the Law for Israel, every bit as much as the words spoken directly by God. For the most part, modern-day Jews and Christians assign the same authority to Deuteronomy as they do to the rest of the Torah. Generally speaking, we do not have people writing critically of the words of Moses, but upholding the authority of the previous books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. If someone writes, *Moses was a good man, but he made a number of errors in his interpretation of Israel's history*; then that same person will also be critical of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.
  - 4) In other words, even though most of the book of Deuteronomy is Moses speaking extemporaneously to the people of Israel, it is not considered *less than* with respect to the previous books. Even though it may sound somewhat blasphemous to say, *Moses' words in the book of Deuteronomy are given the same authority as God's words in the previous three books*. This fact

## An Overview of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

is one of the most revolutionary things about the book of Deuteronomy. This is foundational to the concept of Verbal Plenary Inspiration. The Word of God is inspired throughout; the authority of the Word of God is not limited to the specific times God is said to be speaking. Therefore, this authority is extended to all the books of the Bible. When going through some other book or passage, and we have doubts or questions, the problem is with us and not with the Scriptures.

- 5) The book of Deuteronomy will include the death of Moses, which would have been written by Joshua (who acted as Moses' amanuenses (secretary) for some period of time, probably beginning in the book of Numbers. Having written God's words for all of this time, Joshua saw no reason to exclude Moses' death from the grand arc of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
5. In the four books of Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), we begin with his birth and end with his death, a period of 120 years.
  - 1) Moses' first 40 years take him from his birth to his escape from Egypt (because he killed a slave master). Exodus 1:1–2:15
  - 2) Moses spends years 40–80 in Midian, having been married, and assuming charge of his father-in-law's business (shepherding). Exodus 2:16–25
  - 3) Ages 80–120: Moses is called by God to lead Israel out of Egypt. This is Exodus 3 through Deuteronomy 34 (the end of the book of Deuteronomy).
  - 4) Therefore, most of the books of Moses cover about 40–41 years.

The book of Joshua will pick up historically right after Deuteronomy.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

At this point, God is going to make some very specific laws, laws which apply to that time and age; but laws which often have a much wider application. What I mean by this is, when Christians or Jews are somehow involved with the formation of their government, neither should attempt to apply the laws from Moses' writings verbatim to their nation. Nevertheless, these writings provide us with very important applications.

Exodus 21:1 **Now these are the judgments that you will place before the sons of Israel:...** (Kukis paraphrase)

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If you buy a servant Hebrew, six years he will serve and in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing. If in himself he comes in, in himself he will go out. If a lord [or, *owner*] of a woman, he, and has gone out his woman with him. If his lord [= *adonai*; or, *master*] will give to him a woman and she has born to him sons or daughters, the wife (and her children) will be to her lord [or, *master*] and he will go out in himself. And if saying he says the slave, “I have loved my lord [or, *master*], my woman and my children, I will not go out free.” And has brought him his lord [or, *master*] unto the Elohim [= *elohim*; or, *the judges*] and he has brought him near unto the door and unto the doorpost and has bored through his lord [or, *master*] his ear with the awl, and he has served him to forever.

Exodus  
21:2–6

If you purchase a Hebrew servant, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing. If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, *lord, husband, master*] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gives to him a wife and she bears sons and/or daughters to him, then the wife is [still the property of] her master and he [the slave] will go out by himself. But, if he clearly says, “I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free;” then his master will bring him to the judges [lit., *elohim*] [to say this] and he will bring him near to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve him [his master] forever.

If you purchase a Hebrew servant, then he will serve you for six years; however, he will go out free in the seventh year, owing you nothing. If he became your slave as a single man, then he will leave his servitude to you as a single man. If he entered into servitude to you as a married man, then his wife will go out with him—they will both be free. However, if his master gives him a wife (and, let’s say, she also bears sons or daughters to him), she is still the property of the master (along with the children). Therefore, in the seventh year, he may go out in freedom, but by himself, as that is the state in which he became a slave. However, if he clearly says, “I love my master, my wife and my children;” then his master will bring him to the judges, in order for him to make this public declaration. His master will also bring him to the door or to the door post, and then his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master forever after that.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

If you buy a servant Hebrew, six years he will serve and in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing. If in himself he comes in, in himself he will go out. If a lord [or, *owner*] of a woman, he, and has gone out his woman with him. If his lord [= *adonai*; or, *master*] will give to him a woman and she has born to him sons or daughters, the wife (and her children) will be to her lord [or, *master*] and he will go out in himself. And if saying he says the slave, “I have loved my lord [or, *master*], my woman and my children, I will not go out free.” And has brought him his lord [or, *master*] unto the Elohim [= *elohim*; or, *the judges*] and he has brought him near unto the door and unto the doorpost and has bored through his lord [or, *master*] his ear with the awl, and he has served him to forever.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Jerusalem targum  
Targum (Onkelos)

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When thou dost purchase a servant, a son of Israel, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh go forth free, for nothing. If he came in alone, he shall go out alone; if the husband of a wife, his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and the children are the master's, and he shall go out alone. But if the servant saying shall say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free; his master shall bring him



	before the judges, and shall take him to the door, even to the post, and his master shall bore his ear with an awl; and he shall be to him a working servant for ever.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	If thou shalt have bought a son of Israel, on account of his theft, six years he shall serve, and at the incoming of the seventh he shall go out free without price. If he came in alone, he shall go out alone: but if (he be) the husband of a wife, a daughter of Israel, his wife shall go out with him. If his master give him a wife, an handmaid, and she bear him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to his master, and he may go out alone. But if the servant shall affirm and say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, (and) I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him before the judges, and shall receive from them the power, and bring him to the door that hath posts; and his master shall pierce his right ear with an awl; and he shall be a servant to serve him until the jubela.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve you: in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. With what raiment he came in, with the like let him go out: if having a wife, his wife also shall go out with him. But if his master gave him a wife, and she has borne sons and daughters: the woman and her children shall be her master's: but he himself shall go out with his raiment. And if the servant shall say: I love my master and my wife and children, I will not go out free: His master shall bring him to the gods, and he shall be set to the door and the posts, and he shall bore his ear through with an awl: and he shall be his servant for ever.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.) Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years and in the seventh he shall go out free without paying anything. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he is married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go out free;' then his master shall bring him to God, and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T. Plain English Aramaic Bible Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	. . When you buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve you; and in the seventh year he shall go out free from your house without price. If he came in single, he shall go out single; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be his masters and he shall go out alone. And if the servant shall say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; Then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or to the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years will he serve you, and in the seventh year he will go forth free for nothing. If he should have come in alone, he will also go forth alone; and if his wife should have gone in together with him, his wife also will go out. Moreover, if his master give him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters, the wife and the children will be his master's; and he will go forth alone. And if the servant should answer and say, I love my master and wife and children, I will not go away free; his master will bring him to the judgment-seat of God, and then will he bring him to the door, —to the door-post, and his master will bore his ear through with an awl, and he will serve him for ever.

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English

If you get a Hebrew servant for money, he is to be your servant for six years, and in the seventh year you are to let him go free without payment. If he comes to you by himself, let him go away by himself: if he is married, let his wife go away with him. If his master gives him a wife, and he gets sons or daughters by her, the wife and her children will be the property of the master, and the servant is to go away by himself. But if the servant says clearly, My master and my wife and children are dear to me; I have no desire to be free: Then his master is to take him to the gods of the house, and at the door, or at its framework, he is to make a hole in his ear with a sharp-pointed instrument; and he will be his servant for ever.

Easy English

If you buy an Israelite slave, he must work for you for six years. But in the seventh year he is a free man. He can leave you. He does not have to pay you any money. If he came to you alone, he is free to leave alone. If he came with a wife, she can leave with him. But if his master gives him a wife, she is her master's slave. And if she has had children, they are also her master's slaves. Only the husband can leave the master.

But perhaps the slave may say: "I love my master, my wife and my children. I will not go away like a free man!" Then his master must take him in front of the judges. He must lead him to the door, or to the edge of the door. There the master must push the sharp point of a tool through the slave's ear. Then he will always be his master's slave.

Easy-to-Read Version–2001

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Easy-to-Read Version–2006

"If you buy a Hebrew [Or "Israelite."] slave, then that slave will serve for only six years. After six years, he will be free, and he will have to pay nothing. If he is not married when he becomes your slave, when he becomes free, he will leave without a wife. But if the man is married when he becomes your slave, then he will keep his wife at the time he is made free. If the slave is not married, the master can give him a wife. If that wife gives birth to sons or daughters, she and her children will belong to the master. After the slave is finished with his years of service, he will be made free.

God's Word™

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Good News Bible (TEV)

### The Treatment of Slaves

"Give the Israelites the following laws: If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve you for six years. In the seventh year he is to be set free without having to pay anything. If he was unmarried when he became your slave, he is not to take a wife with him when he leaves; but if he was married when he became your slave, he may take his wife with him. If his master gave him a wife and she bore him sons or daughters, the woman and her children belong to the master, and the man is to leave by himself. But if the slave declares that he loves his master, his wife, and his children and does not want to be set free, then his master shall take him to the place of worship. There he is to make him stand against the door or the doorpost and put a hole through his ear. Then he will be his slave for life. V. 1 is included for context.

The Message

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Names of God Bible

"Whenever you buy a Hebrew slave, he will be your slave for six years. In the seventh year he may leave as a free man, without paying for his freedom. If he comes to you by himself, he must leave by himself. If he comes as a married man, his wife may leave with him. If his master gives him a wife and she gives birth to sons or daughters, the wife and her children belong to the master, and the slave must leave by himself. But if he makes this statement: 'I hereby declare my love for my master, my wife, and my children. I don't want to leave as a free man,' then his master must bring him to **Elohim**. The master must bring him to the door or the doorframe and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his slave for life.

NIRV

### Set Your Hebrew Servants Free

"Suppose you buy a Hebrew servant. He must serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, you must set him free. He does not have to pay anything. If he does

not have a wife when he comes, he must go free alone. But if he has a wife when he comes, she must go with him. Suppose his master gives him a wife. And suppose she has sons or daughters by him. Then only the man will go free. The woman and her children will belong to her master.

“But suppose the servant says, ‘I love my master and my wife and children. I don’t want to go free.’ Then his master must take him to the judges. His master must take him to the door or doorpost of his master’s house. His master must poke a hole through his servant’s earlobe into the door or doorpost. Then he will become his servant for life.

New Simplified Bible

»When you buy a Hebrew slave he will be your slave for six years. In the seventh year he may leave as a free man without paying for his freedom. »If he was single at the time you bought him he alone must be set free. If he was married at that time, both he and his wife must be given their freedom. »If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master. He shall go out alone. »What if the slave loves his wife and children so much that he will not leave without them? »He must stand beside either the door or the doorpost at the place of worship. His owner will punch a small hole through one of his ears with a sharp metal rod. This makes him a slave for life.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible  
College Press Bible Study  
Contemporary English V.

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If you buy a Hebrew slave, he must remain your slave for six years. But in the seventh year you must set him free, without cost to him. If he was single at the time you bought him, he alone must be set free. But if he was married at the time, both he and his wife must be given their freedom. If you give him a wife, and they have children, only the man himself must be set free; his wife and children remain the property of his owner. But suppose the slave loves his wife and children so much that he won't leave without them. Then he must stand beside either the door or the doorpost at the place of worship, while his owner punches a small hole through one of his ears with a sharp metal rod. This makes him a slave for life.

The Living Bible

“If you buy a Hebrew slave, [that is, “If he owes you money and defaults in the payment, and thus becomes your slave.”] he shall serve only six years and be freed in the seventh year, and need pay nothing to regain his freedom.  
“If he sold himself as a slave before he married, then if he married afterwards, only he shall be freed; but if he was married before he became a slave, then his wife shall be freed with him at the same time. But if his master gave him a wife while he was a slave, and they have sons or daughters, the wife and children shall still belong to the master, and he shall go out by himself free.  
“But if the man shall plainly declare, ‘I prefer my master, my wife, and my children, and I would rather not go free,’ then his master shall bring him before the judges and shall publicly bore his ear with an awl, and after that he will be a slave forever.

New Berkeley Version  
New Life Version

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If you buy a Hebrew servant, he will work for six years. In the seventh year he will go free, paying nothing. If he comes alone, he will leave by himself. If he is married, then his wife will leave with him. If his owner gives him a wife and she gives birth to his sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her owner, and he will leave by himself. But if the servant says, ‘I love my owner, my wife and my children; I do not care to go free,’ then his owner will bring him to the judges. And he will bring him to the door or the side of the door. There his owner will make a hole in his ear with a sharp object. And he will serve him all his life.

New Living Translation

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## Unlocked Dynamic Bible

When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for only six years. In the seventh year you must free him from being your slave, and he does not have to pay you anything for setting him free. If he was not married before he became your slave, and if he marries someone while he is your slave, his wife is not to be set free with him. But if he was married before he became your slave, you must free both him and his wife. If the master of a slave gives him a wife, and she gives birth to sons or daughters while her husband is a slave, only the man is to be freed. His wife and children will continue to be slaves of their master. But when it is time for the slave to be set free, if the slave says, 'I love my master and my wife and my children, and I do not want to be set free,' then his master must take him to the place where they worship God. There he must make the slave stand against the door or the doorpost. Then the master will use an awl to make a hole in the slave's ear and fasten something to the slave's ear to show that he will own that slave for the rest of his life.

## Unfolding Bible Simplified

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**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

## American English Bible

'If you buy a Hebrew slave, he may only serve you for six years; for in the seventh year, he must be set free without cost. If he comes alone, he must leave alone; but if his woman comes with him, his woman must also leave with him. However, if his master gives him a woman and she gives birth to sons or daughters; she and her children belong to the master, so [the slave] will leave alone. But if the slave should say, *I love my master, my woman, and my children, so I don't want to leave free*; his master should bring him to the judgment-seat of God and take him up to the door, where he will use an awl to punch [a hole through] his ear against the doorframe, [to signify] that he will serve [his master] through the age.

## Beck's American Translation

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## Common English Bible

When you buy a male Hebrew slave, he will serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he will go free without any payment. If he came in single, he will leave single. If he came in married, then his wife will leave with him. If his master gave him a wife and she bore him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master. He will leave single. However, if the slave clearly states, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, and I don't want to go free," then his master will bring him before God. He will bring him to the door or the doorpost. There his master will pierce his ear with a pointed tool, and he will serve him as his slave for life.

## New Advent (Knox) Bible

If thou dost buy a slave that is a Hebrew by race, he shall do thee six years' service, and in the seventh year, without any ransom paid, he shall go free. He shall leave thy service in the same guise in which he entered it;[2] if he came to thee married, his wife shall go free with him. But if his master has assigned a wife to him, and she has borne sons and daughters, this woman and her children shall belong to the master; the slave shall go free in the same guise as before. It may be that the slave, for love of his master, and of his own wife and children, will refuse to take his leave; if so, his master shall bring him before the judgement-seat, and then fasten his ear with an auger to door or door-post, in token that the man is his slave in perpetuity.[3]

[2] 'In the same guise'; the Latin here translates as if it were a question of the slave's clothing. But the meaning of the Hebrew text is, that if the slave entered service all by himself, he is to leave it all by himself; and so also in verse 4.

[3] 'Before the judgement-seat'; literally, 'before the gods', perhaps meaning 'before the judges'; cf. Psalms 81.6.

## Translation for Translators

When/If you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for only six years. In the seventh year you must free him *from being your slave*, and he is not required to pay

you anything *for setting him free*. If he was not married before he became your slave, and if he marries *someone while he is your slave*, his wife is not to be set free with him. But if he was married before he became your slave, you must free both him and his wife. If a slave's master gives him a wife, and she gives birth to sons or daughters *while her husband is a slave*, only the man is to be freed. His wife and children will continue to be slaves of their master. But when it is time for the slave to be set free, if the slave says, 'I love my master and my wife and my children, and I do not want to be set free,' then his master must take him to *the place where they worship God* (OR, to *the owner's house*). There he must make the slave stand against the door or the doorpost. Then the master will use an *awl/pointed metal rod* to make a hole in the slave's ear. Then *he will fasten a tag to the slave's ear to indicate that* *he will own that slave for the rest of his life/he will own the slave as long as the slave lives*.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible .

Christian Standard Bible .

Conservapedia Translation

If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve you for six years, and in the seventh year he will be free again [Slaves are normally not to remain slaves forever. Note the term: six years, corresponding to the six days of creation.] and owe you nothing. If he came in single, he will go out single; if he had a wife, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she gave birth to sons or daughters for him, then the wife and her children will still belong to the master, and he will go out single. Now if the slave is willing to say [The Hebrew repeats the verb "to say" for emphasis.] directly, "I love my master, my wife, and my children, and I would rather not reclaim my freedom," then his master will bring him to the judges, and will also bring him close to the door, or to the door jamb. There his master will bore his ear through with an awl, and he will serve him for the rest of his life. Literally, "serve him for eon." Greek has the same idiom.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

A servant shall serve six years' servitude, and in the seventh he shall go out to freedom. If he is single, he shall go out single; if he has a wife, his wife shall go out with him. But if his master has given him a wife, and she has borne sons or daughters to him, the wife and her children which she has borne shall belong to the master, and he shall go away single. If, however, the servant says, 'I like my master, my wife, and my children' he shall not go into freedom; but his master shall present him to the magistrates, and station him at the door, or at the door-posts, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve continuously.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

If you buy a servant that is an Hebrew, six years he shall serve, and the seventh he shall go out free paying nothing. If he came alone, he shall go out alone: If he came married, his wife shall go out with him. And if his master have given him a wife and she have borne him sons or daughters: then the wife and her children shall be her masters and he shall go out alone. But and if the servant say I love my master and my wife and my children, I will not go out free. Then let his master bring him unto the \*gods and set him to the door or the doorpost, and bore his ear through with an nail, and let him be his servant forever. \*gods; marginal note: Godly judges and princes who settled matters according to Godly law.

HCSB

#### Laws about Slaves

"When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve for six years; then in the seventh he is to leave as a free man [Lit *to go forth*] without paying anything. If he arrives alone, he is to leave alone; if he arrives with [Lit *he is the husband of*] a wife, his wife is to leave with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children belong to her master, and the man must leave alone.



International Standard V  
Jubilee Bible 2000  
H. C. Leupold  
Lexham English Bible

"But if the slave declares: 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I do not want to leave as a free man,' his master is to bring him to the judges [Or *to God*; that is, to His sanctuary or court] and then bring him to the door or doorpost. His master must pierce his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master for life.

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'If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve six years, and in the seventh he will go out as free for nothing. If he comes in single, he will go out single. If he is the husband of a wife, his wife will go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears for him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master, and [the slave] will go out single. But if the slave explicitly says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free," his master will present him to God and bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he will serve him forever.

NIV, ©2011

### Hebrew Servants

"If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. If he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and only the man shall go free.

"But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. [Or *before God*] He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.

Peter Pett's translation  
Unfolding Bible Literal Text  
Unlocked Literal Bible

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'If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve for six years, and in the seventh year he will go free without paying anything. If he came by himself, he must go free by himself; if he is married, then his wife must go free with him. If his master gave him a wife and she bore him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master, and he must go free by himself. But if the servant plainly says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free," then his master must bring him to God. The master must bring him to a door or doorpost, and his master must bore his ear through with an awl. Then the servant will serve him for the rest of his life.

Urim-Thummim Version

If you acquire a Hebrew slave, 6 years he will serve but in the 7th he will go out as a freeman for nothing. If he came in by himself he will go out by himself, if he was a husband then his woman will go out with him. If his master has given him a woman and she has gendered him sons or daughters, the woman and her children will be her master's and he will go out by himself. But if the slave will plainly say, I love my master, my woman and my children and I will not go out as a freeman. Then his master will bring him to the judges and he will also bring him to the door, or to the door post and his master will pierce his ear through with a boring instrument, and he will serve him for the ages.

Wikipedia Bible Project

If you buy a Hebrew slave, six years he will work, and on the seventh he will leave free, at no cost. If he came single, he will leave singly, if he is a man with wife, and his wife will leave with him. If his master will give him a wife, and she bore him sons or daughters, the woman and her sons will be to her master, and he will leave singly. And if says the slave, he says: "I have loved my master and my wife and my sons. I will not leave free." And his master submitted him to God, and he submitted him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will drill his ear through with an awl, and he is his slave forever.



**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988) .

The Heritage Bible

If you set up a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years, and he shall go out in the seventh free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were lord of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. If his lord has given him a wife, and she has born him sons or daughters, the wife, and her children shall be her lord's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant, saying, shall say, I love my lord, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free, Then his lord shall bring him near to God; he shall also bring him near to the door or to the door post, and his lord shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

New American Bible (2002)

When you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall be given his freedom without cost. If he comes into service alone, he shall leave alone; if he comes with a wife, his wife shall leave with him. But if his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall remain the master's property and the man shall leave alone. If, however, the slave declares, 'I am devoted to my master and my wife and children; I will not go free,'<sup>2</sup> his master shall bring him to God and there, at the door or doorpost, he shall pierce his ear with an awl, thus keeping him as his slave forever.

**2** [6] To God: to the sanctuary; or perhaps the phrase is to be rendered, "to the gods," in the sense of "to the judges." Cf ⇒ Psalm 82:1. Since the expression "to have an open ear" meant "to obey," a pierced ear lobe was an ancient symbol of obedience. Cf ⇒ Psalm 40:7.

New English Bible—1970

New Jerusalem Bible

'When you buy a Hebrew slave, his service will last for six years. In the seventh year he will leave a free man without paying compensation. If he came single, he will depart single; if he came married, his wife will depart with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master, and he will depart alone. But if the slave says, "I love my master and my wife and children; I do not wish to be freed," then his master will bring him before God and then, leading him to the door or the doorpost, his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and the slave will be permanently his.

New RSV

When you buy a male Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, but in the seventh he shall go out a free person, without debt. If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's and he shall go out alone. But if the slave declares, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out a free person," then his master shall bring him before God. He shall be brought to the door or the doorpost; and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him for life.

Revised English Bible—1989

When you purchase a Hebrew as a slave, he will be your slave for six years; in the seventh year he is to go free without paying anything. If he comes to you alone, he is to go away alone; but if he is already a married man, his wife is to go away with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman with her children belongs to her master, and the man must go away alone. But if the slave should say, "I am devoted to my master and my wife and children; I do not wish to go free," then his master must bring him to God: he is to be brought to the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl; the man will then be his slave for life.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible

"If you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to work six years; but in the seventh, he is to be given his freedom without having to pay anything. If he came single, he is to

leave single; if he was married when he came, his wife is to go with him when he leaves. But if his master gave him a wife, and she bore him sons or daughters, then the wife and her children will belong to her master, and he will leave by himself. Nevertheless, if the slave declares, 'I love my master, my wife and my children, so I don't want to go free,' then his master is to bring him before God; and there at the door or doorpost, his master is to pierce his ear with an awl; and the man will be his slave for life.

exeGeses companion Bible  
Hebraic Roots Bible

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When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he comes in with his body, he shall go out with his body. If he was the husband of a wife, his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears sons or daughters to him, the wife and her children shall belong to her master; and he shall go out with his body. And if the slave truly says, I love my master, my wife and my children; I do not desire to go out free, his master shall bring him to Elohim, and one shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost; and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

Israeli Authorized Version  
The Israel Bible (beta)  
JPS (Tanakh—1985)  
Kaplan Translation  
*The Scriptures* 1998

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"When you buy a Hebrew servant, he serves six years, and in the seventh he goes out free, for naught.  
"If he comes in by himself, he goes out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.  
"If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children are her master's, and he goes out by himself.  
"And if the servant truly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children, let me not go out free,' then his master shall bring him before Elohim, and shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl. And he shall serve him forever.

Tree of Life Version

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### **Weird English, 𐤀𐤋𐤅𐤃 English, Anachronistic English Translations:**

Alpha & Omega Bible

IF YOU BUY A HEBREW SERVANT, SIX YEARS SHALL HE SERVE YOU, AND IN THE SEVENTH YEAR HE SHALL GO FORTH FREE FOR NOTHING. IF HE SHOULD HAVE COME IN ALONE, HE SHALL ALSO GO FORTH ALONE; AND IF HIS WIFE SHOULD HAVE GONE IN TOGETHER WITH HIM, HIS WIFE ALSO SHALL GO OUT. MOREOVER, IF HIS MASTER GIVE HIM A WIFE, AND SHE HAVE BORN HIM SONS OR DAUGHTERS, THE WIFE AND THE CHILDREN SHALL BE HIS MASTER'S; AND HE SHALL GO FORTH ALONE. AND IF THE SERVANT SHOULD ANSWER AND SAY, 'I LOVE MY MASTER AND WIFE AND CHILDREN, I WILL NOT GO AWAY FREE'; HIS MASTER SHALL BRING HIM TO THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF THE THEOS (*Alpha & Omega*), AND THEN SHALL HE BRING HIM TO THE DOOR,— TO THE DOOR-POST, AND HIS MASTER SHALL BORE HIS EAR THROUGH WITH AN AWL, AND HE SHALL SERVE HIM FOR EVER.

Awful Scroll Bible

Were yous to buy a Hebrew slave, six years he was to serve, and in the seventh, he was to go out free, graciously. Was he to come in by himself, he was to go out by himself. Was he a husband to a wife, his wife was to go out with him. Was his master to give him a wife, and she is to have bore forth sons and daughters, the wife and the children is his master's; even was he to go out by himself. Was the slave to say: I am to have loved you master, and the wife and children - was I to go out being freed? - His master is to have drawn near to he of mighty ones, and he

Charles Thomson OT  
Concordant Literal Version

is to have been brought to a door, even the doorpost, and his master is to have pierced, his ear with an awl, even is he, to have served him continually.

Darby Translation  
exeGeses companion Bible

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When you buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve you, and in the seventh he shall go forth free gratuitously. If by himself he came, by himself he shall go forth. If he was the possessor of a wife, then his wife will go forth with him. Yet if his lord should give him a wife, and she bears for him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall become her lord's, and he may go forth by himself. Yet if the servant should say, yea say, I love my lord, my wife and my sons; I shall not go forth free, then his lord will bring him close to the elohim, and bring him close to the door or to the jamb, and his lord will bore his ear with an awl; and he will serve him for the eon.

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When you chattelize a Hebrew servant,  
he serves six years:  
and in the seventh he goes out gratuitously liberated.  
If he comes in with his body,  
he goes out with his body:  
if he was master of a woman,  
then his woman goes out with him.  
If his adoni gives him a woman  
and she births him sons or daughters;  
the woman and her children are to her adoni  
and he goes out with his body.  
And if in saying, the servant says,  
I love my adoni, my woman and my sons;  
I go not out liberated:  
then his adoni brings him to Elohim;  
he also brings him to the door or to the door post;  
and his adoni bores through his ear with an aul;  
and he serves him eternally.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

If thou acquire an eved Ivri, shesh shanim he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out lachafeshi (to the freedom) for no charge.  
If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were a ba'al isha, then his isha shall go out with him.  
If his adon have given him an isha, and to him she gives birth to banim or banot; the isha and her yeledim shall be her adon's, and he shall go out [free] by himself.  
And if the eved shall plainly say, I love adoni, my isha, and my banim; I will not go out lachafeshi (to the freedom);  
Then his adon shall bring him unto HaElohim; he shall also bring him to the delet (door), or unto the mezuzah; and his adon shall pierce through his ozen (ear) with a piercing-tool; then he shall serve him l'olam.

Rotherham's *Emphasized B.* .  
Third Millennium Bible .

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

"If you purchase a Hebrew servant [because of his debt or poverty], he shall serve six years, and in the seventh [year] he shall leave as a free man, paying nothing. If he came [to you] alone, he shall leave alone; if he came married, then his wife shall leave with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she gives birth to sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall leave [your service] alone. But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not leave as a free man,' then his master shall bring him to God

## The Expanded Bible

[that is, to the judges who act in God's name], then he shall bring him to the door or doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl (strong needle); and he shall serve him for life.

“If [or When] you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve you for six years. In the seventh year you are to set him free, and he will have to pay nothing [with no debt]. If he is not married when he becomes your slave [<sup>L</sup> came single/alone], he must leave without a wife [<sup>L</sup> single; alone]. But if he is married when he becomes your slave [<sup>L</sup> comes in with a wife], he may take [<sup>L</sup> go out with] his wife with him. If the slave's master gives him a wife, and she gives birth to sons or daughters, the woman and her children will belong to the master. When the slave is set free, only he may leave [<sup>L</sup> He will go out single/alone].

“But if the slave says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children, and I don't want to go free,’ then the slave's master must take him to God [<sup>T</sup> the judges; <sup>C</sup> Hebrew: Elohim]. The master is to take him to a door or doorframe [doorpost] and punch a hole through [pierce] the slave's ear using a sharp tool [an awl]. Then the slave will serve that master all his life.

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, as a slave, six years he shall serve in this capacity; and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing, the idea being that he has earned his freedom by his six years' service. If he came in by himself, literally, with his body, that is, unmarried, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. Cf Exodus 22:3; Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12-15. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters, the woman, of course, being a slave also, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. The man could have his freedom, if he chose, but the woman would still remain the master's property, and her children as well. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free, the slave preferring a continuation of his slavery in the company of his family to freedom without his loved ones, then his master shall bring him unto the judges, before the proper officers; he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post of his house; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever, the opening in the ear marking the slave as such.

## Syndein/Thieme

If you buy an Hebrew servant/slave, six years he shall serve and in the seventh {year} he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

{Note: It was the custom of the day that if a person from his free will wanted to be a slave and the master agreed, that he would literally put an awl through his ear and 'nail' him to the front door. That was the symbol that this 'deal' was agreed to by both parties. The scar in the ear was a life-long testimony to the transaction.}.

## The Voice

**Eternal One (to Moses):** If you purchase a male Hebrew slave, he will be your servant for six years only. When the seventh year arrives, he will go free without having to pay a price for his freedom.

**In Moses' day, slavery exists everywhere in the world, and slaves are the first to be given protection under these guiding principles or judgments.**

If you acquire a slave who is not married, then he will depart as a single man. But if you acquire a man who is married, then his wife will also leave when he goes free.

If his master provides a wife for him, and the wife gives him sons and daughters, then both the wife and the children belong to the master, and only the slave will leave the master's service *when the seventh year arrives*.

But *if the seventh year arrives* and the slave freely renounces *his right to freedom*, saying, "My heart is full of love for my master, my wife, and my children. I will not leave *my master's service* as a free man," then his master will present him to the True God. [Greek manuscripts read, "to the lawcourt of God."] Next his master will escort him to the doorway and pierce his ear *against the doorpost* with an awl. Then everyone will know this slave will serve his master for life.

## Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Should you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work [for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he shall go out to freedom without charge.

**Should you buy a Hebrew slave:** A slave who is himself a Hebrew. Or perhaps it means only a slave of a Hebrew, a Canaanite [servant] whom you bought from a Hebrew. And concerning him, he [the Torah] says, "he shall work [for] six years." How [then] can I apply the [law in the following] verse, "and you shall bequeath them" (Lev. 25:46) ? [Does this verse apply] concerning one [a servant] purchased from a non-Jew, but one [a servant] purchased from an Israelite goes free after six years? Therefore, the Torah states: "Should your brother, a Hebrew man... be sold to you, [he shall serve you for six years]" (Deut. 15:12). [This is the clarification that] I [God] said this only regarding your brother. — [From Mechilta]

**Should you buy:** from the hand of the court, who sold him [into servitude] because of his theft, as it is said: "If he has no [money], he shall be sold for his theft" (Exod. 22:2). Or perhaps it refers only to one who sold oneself [into servitude] because of poverty, but if the court sold him, he does not go free after six [years]? When he [the Torah] says: "And if your brother becomes impoverished beside you and is sold to you" (Lev. 25:39), one who sells oneself because of poverty is mentioned [here]. So [to avoid repetition,] how do I apply "Should you buy" ? [By understanding that this is] concerning one sold by the court.

**to freedom:** Heb. וְשָׁחַט, to freedom.

If he comes [in] alone, he shall go out alone; if he is a married man, his wife shall go out with him.

**If he comes [in] alone:** Heb. וּפָגַב, meaning that he was not married, as the Targum renders: יְהוּדִי וְלֹבָא. The expression וּפָגַב means "with his skirt," [i.e., the skirt of his cloak, meaning] that he came only as he was, alone within his clothing, in the skirt of his garment.

**he shall go out alone:** [This] tells [us] that if he was not married at first, his master may not give him a Canaanite maidservant from whom to beget slaves. — [From Kid. 20a] [

**if he is a married man:** [Lit., if he is someone's husband, meaning] an Israelite [woman]. — [From Mechilta]

**his wife shall go out with him:** Now who brought her in that she should go out? Rather, the text informs us that whoever purchases a Hebrew slave is [also] responsible for supporting his wife and his children. [From Mechilta, Kid. 22a]

If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone.



**If his master gives him a wife:** From here we deduce that his master has the option to give him [the slave] a Canaanite maidservant [in order] to beget slaves from her. Or, perhaps this means only an Israelite woman? Therefore, Scripture says: "The woman and her children shall belong to her master." Thus, He is speaking only about a Canaanite woman, for a Hebrew woman she, too, goes free after six [years], and even before six [years], when she develops signs [of puberty], she goes free, as it is said: "your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman [that one shall serve you for six years]" (Deut. 15:12). [This] teaches [us] that a Hebrew [maidservant] also goes free after six [years]. — [From Mechilta, Kid. 14b]

But if the slave says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go free,"...

**my wife:** [This refers to] the maidservant.

...his master shall bring him to the judges, and he shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

**to the judges:** Heb. מִיִּהְיֶה־לָּא, to the court to consult his sellers, for they sold him [the slave] to him [to his master]. — [From Mechilta]

**to the door or to the doorpost:** I might think that the doorpost is [a] qualified [place] on which to bore [the servant's ear]. Therefore, Scripture says: "and you shall thrust it into his ear and into the door" (Deut. 15:17), [meaning] "into the door," but not "into the doorpost." What then does or to the doorpost mean? [The text is] comparing the door to the doorpost. Just as the doorpost is upright [i.e., attached to the house; otherwise it is not called a doorpost], so is the door upright. [A detached door may not be used for the ritual of ear boring.]-[From Mechilta, Kid. 22b]

**and his master shall bore his ear:** [i.e.,] the right [ear]. Or perhaps it means the left one? Therefore, the Torah states אָזְנוֹ "ear," here and אָזְנוֹ [elsewhere] for [the purpose of making] אֶזְנוֹ שֶׁהָרָגָה, [which means two places having similar wording, which indicates that the rulings pertaining to one situation also apply to the other]. It is stated here: "and his master shall bore his ear," and it is stated regarding the mezora [person with the disease of zara'ath]: "the cartilage of the right ear of the one who is becoming pure" (Lev. 14:14). Just as there the right [ear] is specified, here too the right [ear] is meant. Now, why was the ear chosen to be bored out of all the organs of the body? Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai said: The ear that heard on Mount Sinai, "You shall not steal" (Exod. 20:13) and [then] went and stole, shall be bored. And if [the text is referring to] one who sold himself [into servitude, the reason is that] the ear that heard, "For the children of Israel are slaves to Me" (Lev. 25:55) and [then] went and acquired a master for himself, [this ear] shall be bored. Rabbi Shimon used to interpret this verse [in a beautiful manner] like a bundle of pearls [or a great amount of perfume in this way:]—why were the door and the doorpost singled out from all the fixtures in the house? The Holy One, blessed is He, said: The door and the doorpost were witnesses in Egypt when I passed over the lintel and the two doorposts, and I said, "For the children of Israel are slaves to Me; they are My slaves," but [they are] not slaves to slaves, and [yet] this one went and acquired for himself a master-[his ear] shall be bored before them [for everyone to see]. — [From Kid. 22b]

**and he shall serve him forever:** Heb. כָּל־עַלְמֵי, until the Jubilee year [the fiftieth year of the cycle]. Or perhaps it means literally forever, as its apparent meaning? Therefore, the Torah states [in reference to the Jubilee year]: "and each man to his family you shall return" (Lev. 25:10). [This] informs [us] that fifty years are called כָּל־עַלְמֵי. But [this does] not [mean] that he must serve him [his master] the entire fifty years, but he must serve him until the Jubilee year, regardless of whether it is near or far off. — [From Mechilta, Kid. 15a]

## Kaplan Translation

If you buy a **Hebrew slave**, he shall serve for six years, but in the seventh year, he is to be set free without liability. If he was unmarried when he entered service, he shall leave by himself. But if he was a married man, his wife shall leave with him. If his master gives him a **wife**, and she bears sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall remain her master's property. [The slave] shall leave by himself. If the slave declares, 'I am fond of my master, my wife and my children; I do not want to go free,' his master must bring him to the courts. Standing [the slave] next to the door or doorpost, his master shall pierce his ear with an awl. [The slave] shall then serve [his master] forever.

**Hebrew slave**

One who was sold for robbery; see Exodus 22:2 (Mekhilta; Rashi). See Leviticus 25:39, Deuteronomy 15:12.

**wife**

A gentile slave woman (Mekhilta; Rashi).

**the courts**

(Targum ; Mekhilta; Rashi). The word Elohim denotes God, but it also denotes judges or courts; see Exodus 22:7, 22:8, 22:27, 1 Samuel 2:25, Judges 5:8, Psalms 82:1,6, 138:1. In this case, a court composed of three judges is required (Yad, Avadim 3:9).

**Standing the slave...**

The master must pierce the ear into the door; Deuteronomy 15:17 (see Lechem Mishneh on Yad, Avadim 3:9).

**forever**

Until the jubilee; Leviticus 25:40 Mekhilta; Targum Yonathan; Kiddushin 21b; Rashi).

**Hebrew Servants**

<sup>2a</sup>If you buy<sup>3</sup> a Hebrew servant,<sup>4</sup> he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he will go out free<sup>5</sup> without paying anything.<sup>6</sup> If he came<sup>7</sup> in by himself<sup>8</sup> he will go out by himself; if he had<sup>9</sup> a wife when he came in, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gave<sup>10</sup> him a wife, and she bore sons or daughters, the wife and the children will belong to her master, and he will go out by himself. But if the servant should declare,<sup>11</sup> 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out<sup>12</sup> free,' then his master must bring him to the judges,<sup>13</sup> and he will bring him to the door or the doorposts, and his master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>2sn</sup> See H. L. Ellison, "The Hebrew Slave: A Study in Early Israelite Society," EvQ 45 (1973): 30-35; N. P. Lemche, "The Manumission of Slaves – The Fallow Year – The Sabbatical Year – The Jubel Year," VT 26 (1976): 38-59, and "The 'Hebrew Slave,' Comments on the Slave Law – Ex. 21:2-11," VT 25 (1975): 129-44.

<sup>3tn</sup> The verbs in both the conditional clause and the following ruling are imperfect tense: "If you buy...then he will serve." The second imperfect tense (the ruling) could be taken either as a specific future or an obligatory imperfect. Gesenius explains how the verb works in the conditional clauses here (see GKC 497 §159.bb).

<sup>4sn</sup> The interpretation of "Hebrew" in this verse is uncertain: (1) a gentilic ending, (2) a fellow Israelite, (3) or a class of mercenaries of the population (see W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "Exodus," EBC 2:431). It seems likely that the term describes someone born a Hebrew, as opposed to a foreigner (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 210). The literature on this includes: M. P. Gray, "The Habiru-Hebrew Problem," HUCA 29 (1958): 135-202.

<sup>5sn</sup> The word כְּפֻשִׁי (khofshi) means "free." It is possible that there is some connection between this word and a technical term used in other cultures for a social class of emancipated slaves who were freemen again (see I. Mendelsohn, "New Light on the Hupsu," BASOR 139 [1955]: 9-11).

<sup>6tn</sup> The adverb חִנָּם (hinnam) means "gratis, free"; it is related to the verb "to be gracious, show favor" and the noun "grace."

<sup>7tn</sup> The tense is imperfect, but in the conditional clause it clearly refers to action that is anterior to the action in the next clause. Heb "if he comes in single, he goes out single," that is, "if he came in single, he will go out single."



<sup>8tn</sup> Heb “with his back” meaning “alone.”

<sup>9tn</sup> The phrase says, “if he was the possessor of a wife”; the noun לֵעָב (ba'al) can mean “possessor” or “husband.” If there was a wife, she shared his fortunes or his servitude; if he entered with her, she would accompany him when he left.

<sup>10sn</sup> The slave would not have the right or the means to acquire a wife. Thus, the idea of the master’s “giving” him a wife is clear – the master would have to pay the bride price and make the provision. In this case, the wife and the children are actually the possession of the master unless the slave were to pay the bride price – but he is a slave because he got into debt. The law assumes that the master was better able to provide for this woman than the freed slave and that it was most important to keep the children with the mother.

<sup>11tn</sup> The imperfect with the infinitive absolute means that the declaration is unambiguous, that the servant will clearly affirm that he wants to stay with the master. Gesenius says that in a case like this the infinitive emphasizes the importance of the condition on which some consequence depends (GKC 342-43 §113.o).

<sup>12tn</sup> Or taken as a desiderative imperfect, it would say, “I do not want to go out free.”

<sup>13tn</sup> The word is מִיְהוָה (ha'elohim). S. R. Driver (Exodus, 211) says the phrase means “to God,” namely the nearest sanctuary in order that the oath and the ritual might be made solemn, although he does say that it would be done by human judges. That the reference is to Yahweh God is the view also of F. C. Fensham, “New Light on Exodus 21:7 and 22:7 from the Laws of Eshnunna,” JBL 78 (1959): 160-61. Cf. also ASV, NAB, NASB, NCV, NRSV, NLT. Others have made a stronger case that it refers to judges who acted on behalf of God; see C. Gordon, “מִיְהוָה in its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges,” JBL 54 (1935): 134-44; and A. E. Draffkorn, “Ilani/Elohim,” JBL 76 (1957): 216-24; cf. KJV, NIV.

<sup>14tn</sup> Or “till his life's end” (as in the idiom: “serve him for good”).

New American Bible (2011) When you purchase a Hebrew slave,\* he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall leave as a free person without any payment. If he comes into service alone, he shall leave alone; if he comes with a wife, his wife shall leave with him. But if his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children belong to her master and the man shall leave alone. If, however, the slave declares, ‘I love my master and my wife and children; I will not leave as a free person,’ his master shall bring him to God\* and there, at the door or doorpost, he shall pierce his ear with an awl, thus keeping him as his slave forever. [21:2–6] Lv 25:39–55; Dt 15:12–18; Jer 34:14.

\* [21:2] **Slave:** an Israelite could become a slave of another Israelite as a means of paying a debt, or an Israelite could be born into slavery due to a parent’s status as a slave. Here a time limit is prescribed for such slavery; other stipulations (vv. 20–21, 26–27) tried to reduce the evils of slavery, but slavery itself is not condemned in the Old Testament.

\* [21:6] **To God:** the ritual of the piercing of the slave’s ear, which signified a lifetime commitment to the master, probably took place at the door of the household, where God as protector of the household was called upon as a witness. Another possible location for the ritual would have been the door of the sanctuary, where God or judges would have witnessed the slave’s promise of lifetime obedience to his master.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...if you will purchase a servant of "Ever Other side", he will serve six years, and in the seventh he will go out freely to freedom, if he comes (by) <himself>, he will go out (by) <himself>, if he is the master of a woman, (then) his woman will go out with him, if his lord will give him a woman, and she will bring forth (for) him sons or daughters, the woman and her boys will exist (for) her lord, and he, he will go out (by) <himself>, (but) if the servant will say, I love my lord, my woman and my sons, I will not go out free, (then) his lord will make him draw near to the "**Elohiym**" Powers<sup>11</sup>, and he will make him draw near to the door, or to the doorpost, and his lord will bore through his ear (with) the awl and he will serve him to a distant time,...

C. Thompson (updated) OT	If you purchase a Hebrew servant, he will serve you six years, but in the seventh year he will go out free without ransom. If he came in alone, he will go out alone; but if his wife came with him his wife will go out with him. And if his master has given him a wife and she has born him sons or daughters, the wife and the children will belong to his master, and he will go out alone. And if the servant will answer and say, I love my master and my wife and my children, I will not go away free, his master will bring him to God's court of Justice and there lead him to the door; to the door post, and his master will bore his ear through with an awl and he will serve him for ever.
Context Group Version	If you buy a Hebrew slave, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he is married, then his woman shall go out with him. If his master gives him a woman and she bears him sons or daughters; the woman and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the slave shall plainly say, I give allegiance to my master, my woman, and my sons; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him to God, and shall bring him to the door, or to the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.
English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	If you buy a Hebrew servant, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh he shall go out free without paying anything. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself. If he is married, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he will go out by himself. However, if the servant plainly says, "I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go out free," then his master will bring him to the judges, then he shall also bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	"If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. If he comes <sup>[a]</sup> alone, he shall go out <sup>[b]</sup> alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out <sup>[c]</sup> alone. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' then his master shall bring him to <sup>[d]</sup> God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. a. Exodus 21:3 Lit by himself b. Exodus 21:3 Lit by himself c. Exodus 21:4 Lit by himself d. Exodus 21:6 Or the judges who acted in God's name
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"When you buy a Hebrew servant—six years he does serve, and in the seventh he goes out as a freeman for nought; if by himself he comes in, by himself he goes out;

if he is owner of a wife, then his wife has gone out with him; if his lord give to him a wife, and she has borne to him sons or daughters—the wife and her children are her lord's, and he goes out by himself.

“And if the servant really say: I have loved my lord, my wife, and my sons—I do not go out free; then has his lord brought him nigh unto God, and has brought him nigh unto the door, or unto the side-post, and his lord has bored his ear with an awl, and he has served him—to the age.

### The gist of this passage:

2-6

Exodus 21:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
qânâh (קָנָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to get, acquire, obtain; [of God] to found, to originate, to create; to possess; to redeem [His people]; [of Eve] to acquire; to acquire [knowledge, wisdom]; to buy [purchase, redeem]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7069 BDB #888
‘ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>GE<sup>B</sup>-ved</i> ]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
‘Ēber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced <i>GAY<sup>B</sup>-ver</i> ]	<i>one from beyond, the other side, across, region on the other side; and is transliterated Eber, Heber, Hebrew, Eberite</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #5677 BDB #720

### Translation: If you purchase a Hebrew servant,...

In this first situation, we have a Hebrew person purchasing a Hebrew slave. The primary way that this would happen is, the slave has run out of options in life. He lacks the ability to support himself (and possibly his family), so he appeals to a wealthier man to purchase him.

Perhaps he is also deeply in debt.

What needs to be emphasized here is, there is free will involved on the part of the master and the part of the slave. There may be a variety of circumstances which leads both of them to this place. In the ancient world, the purchase of a slave was not some great evil as it is considered today.

This allowed a person who was personally devastated in the financial realm to build himself back up again. Instead of this, we have bankruptcy laws, which allow a person to become financially destitute and to be able to file a few papers in order to get past that. In Israel's society, every person who was in debt had ways to deal with that debt, and one of them was offering himself as a slave to a wealthy man.

**Application:** Interestingly enough, there is a portion of a political party today who treat slavery as a part of their platform. Now, they do not seem to be very concerned about human trafficking today, which is rampant; but they are ultra-concerned about slave owners from 200 years ago. These same misfits do nothing about present-day slavery, but they will do everything possible to tear down statues of a former slave owners, proposing that, if you disagree with them, then you support slavery, making you a very bad person.

So that there is no misunderstanding, the slavery practiced in America 200 years ago is not the same as the slavery which is found here in Exodus 21. The slave in this case has put himself in this position or he has found himself to be in this position, with no easy way out, apart from indentured servitude.

This does not mean that the slave is morally at fault here. The slave might be a child or young adult of a family who is going through difficult times, and selling him or her is the only immediate solution. Also, there are no moral aspersions being cast upon the slave owner either. The two have entered into a mutually beneficial contract. The slave is allowed to restore himself financially, and the slave owner has another person to help him get stuff done.

Exodus 21:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shêsh (שש) [pronounced shaysh]	six	masculine form of numeral	Strong's #8337 BDB #995
shânîym (שנִיִּם) [pronounced shaw-NEEM]	years	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
‘âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced gaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHD]	to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sh <sup>e</sup> bîy'îy (שִׁבְעִי) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> -bee-EE]	seventh	masculine singular adjective; numeral ordinate with the definite article	Strong's #7637 BDB #988
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
choph <sup>e</sup> shîy (יָשָׁה) [pronounced khof-SHEE]	free [from slavery]; free [from taxes, obligations]	adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2670 BDB #344
chinnâm (כִּנָּם) [pronounced khin-NAHM]	gratuitous, freely, for nothing; for no purpose, in vain, without cause, undeservedly	substantive/adverb	Strong's #2600 BDB #336

**Translation:** ...he will serve for six years, but in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing.

For a Hebrew owning a Hebrew slave, there was a very specific time limit. You could own another Hebrew for 6 years and no longer. In the 7<sup>th</sup> year, the slave was to be set free; and there was to be no fee assessed against him. That is, creative bookkeeping was not allowed in order to keep a slave on.

As we progress in God's laws for Israel, we will find that God will require Israel to observe the Sabbath year, a part of which would involve setting free Hebrew slaves.

Now, in case your mind is racing, and you are worried about, *what if the slave is not a Hebrew*, this will be a part of the Law as well. Just be patient and we will get to that.

What is being described here is a very specific situation at a very particular period of time. The period of time is the time that Israel was a nation to God, which will begin in the book of Joshua,<sup>17</sup> and continue until the time of Jesus and the Apostles.

Exodus 21:2 *If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.* (NKJV)

We are working here both with principle and with analogy. Just as the Hebrews were to spend some time in slavery and then to go out of Egypt, so the Hebrews under private ownership were to do the same. They are God's people and as such are free.

The Bible nowhere takes a direct position against all forms of slavery; even in the book of Philemon, Paul suggests to the recipient that he free his slave, Onesimus, because he is also a believer in Jesus Christ—however, he does not require this (a mature believer would have freed Onesimus and a weaker one would not have). This passage at best implies that slavery is not the ideal position for a slave. This also indicates to us that, even though Paul is an apostle, he does not have the right to tell people how to live their personal lives. Otherwise, he could have simply issued an order to Philemon: "Free Onesimus!"

There are passages in the Old Testament which forbid *man stealing*; and this is how many slaves are provided for slave buyers (we will study this in this very chapter). This is the foundation for the type of slavery practiced in the early history of the United States.

In this verse, where it says they will go out free for nothing, means that there are no requirements for the slave to fulfill in order to be released. The slave does not have to produce a certain amount nor does he have to somehow see that his master is compensated for his release. He is released from slavery for nothing.

Why does the Bible not take issue with slavery? Why not in this, God's perfect law at that time for Israel tell the Hebrews from the outset to free all of their slaves?

### Slavery in Israel

1. Slavery is a social issue.
2. These are laws for the government of Israel, which laws are not designed to correct social ills. Furthermore, some forms of slavery are not necessarily wrong.
3. There are some things which are neither right nor wrong and one of these is slavery, taken as a general principle.
4. I realize that you may have been taught all of your life that slavery is evil and terrible and cannot be justified, but, there are circumstances where a person might benefit by becoming a slave. He might be an orphan or completely without funds, or in great debt, and his only solution is to offer

<sup>17</sup> In the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, Israel was a people, but they did not yet have a land in which they lived.



## Slavery in Israel

himself as a slave. He has nothing to offer except himself. His position as a slave many times frees him from this burdensome debt or from a life of poverty. Furthermore, such an agreement to become an indentured servant is something that both the slave and the master agree to.

5. It is possible for a slave to have an enlightened owner and it is possible for a slave to have a vicious, degenerate owner. Under a fair and just owner, a slave enjoys fair and just treatment and under anyone else, he receives treatment which might vary as to the mood of the owner and it might be out and out cruel. Sometimes, the treatment of slave can begin well, but end badly (for instance, Joseph in the final fifth of the book of Genesis).
6. One issue in slavery is the owner and his spiritual growth.
7. There are free people with jobs today who are worse off than slaves of good masters. A good master provided for the basic necessities of his slaves and provided fair and just treatment of his slaves. There are many jobs today where the workers do not make even enough money to live on; let alone, enough money to support a family with and the treatment which they receive on the job is deplorable. Slaves had their basic necessities met. If not, they did not survive, so that was not smart for a slave owner to do.
8. This is not to say that we need unions and that people should strike, walk out, call in sick, or do anything else to protest their treatment, to change their workplace, or to register their complaints. Here, we appeal to God. If we are unhappy with our station in life, we take night classes or work under someone in a second job in order to learn a trade. If these things are impossible, we continue to work as unto the Lord and appeal to Him. God is just and God is fair. Some human employers are not.
9. Life in most socialist and communist nations is inferior to life as a slave in Israel.
10. In any case, we do not rebel against our employers in any, way, shape or form. Slaves are not serving men but in their slavery they are serving Jesus Christ. Therefore our work habits, our production, our integrity should be as unto the Lord and not as unto man.
  - 1) Ephesians 6:5–8 **You slaves [employees], be obeying your lords [management] according to the standard of the flesh [laws of establishment], with respect for authority and maximum effort, by means of integrity from your right lobe, as to your Christ. Not according to the standard of eye-slavery, as men-pleasers; but as slaves [workers, employees] belonging to Christ, constantly doing the will of your God from the soul. With loyal enthusiasm performing the duties of a slave, as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that each one, if he has done anything good, he himself shall receive with interest this same production from the source of the Lord, whether he is a slave or a free man. (R. B. Thieme, Jr. corrected translation)**
  - 2) Colossians 3:22–25 **Labour, keep on submitting to the authority of the lord's according to the flesh; according to the standard of all things [the laws of divine establishment], not in the sphere of eye-slavery as men-pleasers; but by means of integrity of the right lobe, respecting the Lord. In whatever you do [in the business world], keep on functioning from the soul, as to the Lord and not [to] men, knowing that from the ultimate source of the Lord you shall receive in return the reward from the inheritance; for you are the servant to the Lord Christ. Therefore the one doing wrong shall receive back for the thing which he has done wrong; and there is not partiality. (R. B. Thieme, Jr. corrected translation)**
11. So what about the masters? What about those who own a company?
  - 1) Ephesians 6:9 **Also, you lords [management], be doing the same things toward them [labour], be desisting from bullying; knowing that both their Lord and yours is in heaven; and there is no partiality with Him. (R. B. Thieme, Jr. corrected translation)** Although this passage was written to slave owners regarding their treatment of slaves, it has a wider application, as we find here in Thieme's translation.

## Slavery in Israel

- 2) Colossians 4:1 **Management, be rendering** [from your own resources and power] **both fair treatment and equal wages to your employees, knowing that you also have management in heaven.** (R. B. Thieme, Jr. corrected translation)
12. Note that the bulk of the commands are toward the slave and not toward the master. This is because the slave is in a more difficult position and requires more guidance.
13. Periodically, the Mosaic Law reset the game. Hebrew slaves, for instance, were to be made free in the Sabbath year (every seven years). This was God's expectation for Israel, but they did not follow this particular law of God. They went overboard when it came to observing the Sabbath day, but then ignored their Sabbath years.
14. The prophet Isaiah deals with the manumission of slaves. When Israel is involved in fasting, thinking that this is such a great deal, and that God ought to see their fasting, God suggests that they sort of fast He would like to see is one where they set all of their slaves free (Isaiah 58:1–6). To hell with doing without food; do without your slaves! Isaiah 58:6 **Is not this the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?** (Voice in the Wilderness)
15. There are issues that go far beyond the conditions in the workplace, the wages, etc. Very few people feel that they make enough money or make a fair salary and most people spend all that they make. Our primary relationship is toward God not toward man—therefore, it is to God that we should appeal.
16. There is absolutely nothing in the Bible which indicates that we should expect good working conditions, a fair wage or positive reinforcement. Our work should be done as though we were working directly for Jesus Christ and all of our appeals for better treatment, a better wage, etc. are to be directed to our Lord, Who is in heaven, Who knows and sees all things

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Exodus 21:1 **Now these [are] the judgments [or, judicial decisions] that you will place before them:...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:2 **If you purchase a Hebrew servant, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Exodus 21:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gaph (אָפּ) [pronounced gahf]	<i>back; body; self [himself, herself]; height, elevation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1610 BDB #172



## Exodus 21:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

**Translation:** *If he comes in [as a slave] by himself,...*

*He* refers to the slave.

We then have the preposition *with* and the rarely used noun (with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine singular suffix) gaph (גַּף) [pronounced *gahf*], which was originally translated *body*, but it is only found here, twice in v. 3 and once in v. 4 and then in a completely different sentence and context in Proverbs 9:3. In Proverbs, it is translated *the highest places* and here *body*. I am not sure that there is a reason to translate it *body*. The Septuagint translates this by the Greek word for *alone, one* and I think that we ought to do the same.

I believe the idea here is, when a slave enters into slavery with nothing else apart from his body. His body is all that he has to offer his master (I do not mean that in some crude way).

It is very common for a single man to come into slavery. Such a one might be considered fit for a great variety of labor. However, these general principles could apply to a female slave as well.

## Exodus 21:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gaph (גַּף) [pronounced <i>gahf</i> ]	<i>back; body; self [himself, herself]; height, elevation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1610 BDB #172
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422

**Translation:** *...[then] he will go out by himself.*

This person, when the time of servitude had been fulfilled, he would go out the same way that he came in, by himself; or, as many translate this, *a single male, single, alone*.

The Lexham English Bible reads: *If he comes in single, he will go out single*. The Hebraic Roots Bible: *If he comes in with his body, he shall go out with his body*. (Exodus 21:3a-b)

The slave will receive what he and the master have agreed to (if such an agreement was made)

Although this, by context, refers to a Hebrew slave and a Hebrew master, it could be applied to anyone who is manumitted from slavery.

Exodus 21:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced BAH-gahl]	<i>owner, lord, husband; master; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1167 BDB #127
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
wê (or vê) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
ʿim (עִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** If he [is] the owner [or, lord, husband, master] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him.

There might be times when a family unit is brought into slavery. This is a decision that the man would make; but it is reasonable to assume that debt or poverty played a part in these circumstances.

In this case, the entire family might be employed by the host family (the slave-owning family).

The whole idea here is, this is what is seen by those placing themselves into slavery as the best solution.

We have become so repulsed by slavery that we do not see that a modern-day version of this might be a good solution for many people in many circumstances.

There are many retired people who find it difficult to do normal things, like go out and shop for food. Also, to make the food. There would be some instances where a person who is without means to put themselves into some form of slavery to such a person. The owner would provide food and shelter; perhaps additional funds. In return, the modern-day slave would provide basic services, which might include cleaning, cooking, purchasing food, etc.

**Tangent:** Interestingly enough, we have something similar which occurs in Hong Kong and in many of the more prosperous Arabic nations (like Saudi Arabia or the UAE). Contract workers are bargained for from poorer countries, and hired for a year or for two years (on contract). Even though they are not ever called slaves, some of them live a life of comparable slavery in the house of their employer. They do tend to have more freedoms than a slave in the time of Moses, but they certainly have less freedom in general than, say, their classmates who are able to survive in the Philippines (or, wherever). Although this would never be classified as slavery, it very much is; and, furthermore, workers from the Philippines and elsewhere are very glad to have these options.

Exodus 21:3c ...if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. (NKJV)

No doubt, there would be circumstances where the person in need might be a single man, might be a single woman; or might be a family.

In the illustration here, we are dealing with a man who is married. Perhaps there are children; perhaps not. In any case, if he enters into slavery as a married man, he exits as a married man (and the children, if any, would go with the family).<sup>18</sup>

Exodus 21:3 If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, lord, husband, master] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced *boh*] means *to come (in)*, *to go (in)*. In this context, they are going into slavery. What is interesting, is this: he comes into slavery and goes out of slavery both in the Qal imperfect (which indicates continual action). On the other hand, when his wife goes with him in the Qal perfect (action taken as a singular event). I would have assumed that all of these would have been Qal perfect. So, when entering slavery and exiting slavery, the man's life as a slave and his life as a freed slave are seen as a continuous processes.

Exodus 21:3 If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, lord, husband, master] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There are several scenarios that have to be dealt with here. The first are those where he enters into slavery as single or married; he is allowed to leave in the same marital state. So, what if he marries during slavery? God deals with that situation next:

Exodus 21:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'îm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master];</i> can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

<sup>18</sup> This is not the case if both the husband and wife are slaves who chose to marry while in slavery.

Exodus 21:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

**Translation:** *If his master gives to him a wife...*

Now, let's say that the master provides a wife. In this situation, the woman is likely not a Hebrew (as she would be subject to the same laws already given, meaning that, according to the Law, both must be released in the seventh year).

Furthermore, we may not assume that, just because a master purchases a female slave that she and the slave under consideration will even like one another.

However, we are looking at the circumstance where, the slave owner has a male Hebrew slave and he develops a strong interest in a woman also owned by the slave owner.

Bear in mind, there are a great many options at this point. A slave might meet a woman, owned by his master, while in slavery; and he can choose to do whatever it takes to purchase her from his master once he is in freedom. My point being here, this option of taking a wife when a slave is not the only option. However, this is the option being explored in this law.

Bear in mind that, love being what it is, a male Hebrew slave may not want to wait for X number of years to serve out his term, then do whatever it takes to get enough money to purchase the woman, and then purchase her (assuming that another slave has not made her his wife). So, rather than wait for a period of five years or so, a male Hebrew slave might opt to marry the woman when enslaved (if a Hebrew woman, she would be free within 6 years; if a gentile woman, she could be a slave all of her life). In either case, the man may not want to wait. Furthermore, the life of a slave is not necessarily a bad life. That all depends upon the slave owner.

**Application:** Interestingly enough, there are movements today whose adherents speak disparagingly about slavery in the United States, 200 years ago; and, at the same time, favor a socialistic government, which is, for all intents and purposes, a national slavery. Under socialism, everyone is subject to the whims of the government. If such a person makes an argument that the government must provide a job, food and clothing; well, of course, that is exactly what masters do. Masters provide work, food, clothing and shelter. Those who were slaves in the United States and in ancient Israel are guaranteed a job, food, clothing and shelter. When the government does this, it is still slavery.

Exodus 21:4a *If his master has given him a wife,...* (NKJV)

An interesting literary quirk here: *master* is in the plural but *give* demands a singular subject. This might be the plural of quality rather than of quantity (the verb would indicate that).

I would suggest to you that, this was not an unusual case. Men and women tend to like one another, and in such circumstances, like one another a lot.

In this particular case, the slave owner allows for this marriage to take place. Or, the slave owner might even take his single male slave to an auction of slaves and ask, “What about her?” There could be a variety of circumstances which lead to the slave marrying a woman provided by the master.

Exodus 21:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAH</i> D]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
’ôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

**Translation:** ...and she bears sons and/or daughters to him,...

Now, one possible scenario is, the woman marries the slave and then they have children. They might have sons, they might have daughters, they may have a mixture.

Exodus 21:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדִים) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-law-DEEM</i> ]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## Exodus 21:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾădônâi (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master];</i> can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated <i>Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

**Translation:** ...then the wife is [still the property of] her master...

Now, the underlying truth of the matter is, this woman belongs to the slave owner. No matter what you might say ("No man can own another man"), this was simply a fact of life. Furthermore, not all slavery is cruel and oppressive.

**Tangent:** People argue today that working for minimum wage is cruel and oppressive. Cruelty and oppression, to some degree, are relative concepts (just as wealth is).

**Application:** Life is a trade-off. A person working for minimum wage has his freedom, but he may not be able to afford all of his basic needs. A slave may not have his freedom, but he has his basic needs provided for. If you want freedom, then that includes all that freedom is. If you want slavery, then you should admit that is what you want.

We have already studied the life of Joseph, back in the book of Genesis, where he, as a slave, was greatly prospered, and he rose up from being a slave to becoming the second most powerful man in Egypt. This is an opportunity which came to him *only* because he began in Egypt as a slave. God prospered Joseph under these circumstances.

Slaves can end up having great prosperity and great responsibilities. And, again, no matter what you think, none of this is wrong. There are people in poverty which would give anything to become the slave of a good master. And I have already given the illustration of similar practices taking place in Hong Kong and various Arab countries, with Filipinos offering themselves up as modern-day slaves.

One of the narratives in Genesis is about Abraham sending his most trusted slave east in order to find a wife for his son Isaac. This slave could have gotten to Haran and simply kept on going further east to escape slavery. He did not. He performed the task that Abraham sent him to do. This is **Genesis 24** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Abraham had a number of slaves and Genesis 24 illustrates just how loyal some of his slaves were.

## Exodus 21:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>he, it; him, himself</i> as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214



## Exodus 21:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gaph (גַּף) [pronounced gahf]	<i>back; body; self [himself, herself]; height, elevation</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1610 BDB #172

**Translation:** ...and he [the slave] will go out by himself.

If the wife has been provided by the slave owner, then the slave can leave after 7 years, but, he cannot take with him his master's property (that is, his wife). The woman (and children, if any) belong to the master, not to the slave who married her. It is the master who has provided the food and shelter and care for the wife and children, not the husband.

There are certainly other options at this point. The slave might vow to become a man of means and purchase his wife and children from his former owner. He might just leave, and leave them behind. Or, the Hebrew slave might choose to remain with his master. Now, this is the option explored here by God (remember, God is speaking to Moses here).

What about the woman? I would assume that, if the woman who was purchased is a Hebrew slave, then, like the male, she serves for 6 years and then she goes free.<sup>19</sup> I don't see her as being treated differently in this regard. However, a foreign slave acquired in another way is subject to her master forever.

Exodus 21:4 *If his master gives to him a wife and she bears sons and/or daughters to him, then the wife is [still the property of] her master and he [the slave] will go out by himself.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

A man who comes into slavery as a single man will leave the same way, even if he marries while in slavery. As an aside, this is a very logical and reasonable rule. If a woman consigned to a lifetime of slavery could get out in less than seven years by marrying a Hebrew man—this would provide a whole other reason for marrying.

Exodus 21:3–4 *If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, lord, husband, master] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gives to him a wife and she bears sons and/or daughters to him, then the wife is [still the property of] her master and he [the slave] will go out by himself.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

I know that this will not sit well with many, but this is God's Word as it is applied to the circumstances of that era. Under the circumstance where a wife was acquired through his master in marriage (likely that this would be another slave which is his master's), he does not own this woman but his master does. Therefore, by marriage, he is not suddenly her master in terms of absolute ownership. Just as when we get married, we are still the Lord's. That position does not change, regardless of which temporal changes we go through. What kind of options are open here?

<sup>19</sup> This is according to the Sabbath year laws, which apparently were not followed by the Hebrew people.



### What if the Master Gives a Slave a Wife?

1. A slave has to make a choice between his wife (and possibly family) or freedom from slavery.
2. A slave does not have to marry while he is in slavery; he can wait and then purchase this woman from his former master (depending upon his financial situation after slavery). Similarly, the former slave can consider other options when freed.
3. The slave in freedom can purchase the one he married from his master (in both of these cases, the master of course must be willing to cooperate).
4. The master is not precluded from allowing the wife acquired while in slavery to go out with the husband—however, this is the choice of the master, not the choice of the husband. It is the slave owner who has incurred all of the expenses.
5. Since the woman belongs to the master, the children also belong to the master.
6. The entire issue involves self-discipline on the part of the slave and dedication to the one he loves. He has to make a choice when it comes to marriage, whether to wait or to marry and he has to make a choice when it comes to having children; whether to wait or whether to have them in slavery.
7. There is nothing in the Bible which indicates that we should be able to do just exactly what we want and when we want to do it. We may meet the most wonderful person in the world—however, this does not mean that we should immediately marry and have children.
8. What if the man marries or does not marry; purchases the freedom of his beloved seven years later and she leaves him because she was using him to get out of slavery? So what. That means he exercised poor judgement. Probably half of all marriages today are the result of poor judgement—even though many of them are right man/right woman.
9. What this law does protect is the master. Two slaves, male and female, have very little motivation to marry other than because they are right man/right woman. The woman is not motivated to marry because of freedom because her freedom is not guaranteed by a fellow slave. The man is not motivated to marry for any reason besides love because he realizes that he may not be able to take her out of the household.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

What we have been studying is, *what if a male slave marries a female slave?* Because the law requires a Hebrew slave to be freed after six years, what happens if he married a fellow slave during those six years? One option is, he can be manumitted, but he goes out a freed man but without his wife.

The Law of Moses (actually, the Law of God) does afford him a second option:

### Exodus 21:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾim (יִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

## Exodus 21:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
'ahêb (אָהֵב) [pronounced aw-HAYV <sup>B</sup> ]	<i>to desire, to breathe after; to love; to delight in; human love [for another] [familial, sexual]; human love [desire, appetite] for [food, drink, sleep, wisdom]; human love [for, to God]; God's love [toward men, people of Israel, righteousness]; to like</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #157 BDB #12
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** But, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children;...

Now, recall that this slave may have found himself in these circumstances because of mismanagement of his own money and property; and this may have happened to him where bad decisions did not play a part in his life. Nevertheless, the Hebrew man finds himself in the situation where he had to become a slave; and then he willingly married a woman owned by his master.

This slave testifies clearly that he loves his master, his wife and his children. There are situations where an entire family can find servitude as a good option for them in life. Again, put aside whatever prejudices that you have and recognize that free will is playing a big part in all that is taking place here (despite the fact that these are slaves).

Exodus 21:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
choph <sup>e</sup> shîy (חָפְשִׁי) [pronounced <i>khof-SHEE</i> ]	<i>free [from slavery]; free [from taxes, obligations]</i>	adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2670 BDB #344

**Translation:** ...I will not go out free;”...

The freewill testimony of this slave is, “I will not leave my life of slavery.” If you do not have a predisposition here, you ought to recognize that, there are some situations where this is a good option for the person who is enslaved.

This man is choosing a life where he has a wife, he has children; and he has guaranteed food, shelter and clothing.

Exodus 21:5 **But, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free;"...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Another option occurs to me, and there are reasons why it is missing. Can the man buy his wife (and children, if any) from his former master after being set free? Why is this option missing from this set of regulations?

This is, of course, an option open to the former slave. It is not enshrined in the Law because, there is no right for him to take his family out, if that family was provided for him by his master.

A recently manumitted slave is not going to have a lot of money; and certainly not enough to pay for the manumission of his wife and children. An additional regulation inserted here would imply that he had some sort of legal right, at this point, to take his wife and children; whereas, he does not. His legal right is the free market. His legal right is make enough money to purchase his wife and children at a later date. This strikes me as a pretty remote possibility.

Exodus 21:5 **But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'...** (NKJV)

Note who is first on this list: the master (which is in the singular). The slave is making a clear declaration, likely in front of witnesses, of his freewill choice. He realizes that he will not be able to purchase the freedom of his wife or children and he has a choice; he chooses whatever is more important to him—his wife and children or his

station in life. A man faced with these kinds of choices would think quite carefully before entering into marriage as a slave. We face a similar circumstances today even in today's world.

**Application:** As a single person, a man can pick up stakes, move from job to job, move from state to state or country to country, unencumbered by social responsibilities. However, when one takes on a wife and child, one assumes a great many responsibilities, not the least of which is the providing of the basic necessities for his family. This means that a man in order to take care of his wife and children at times must remain in a job that he does not like, that he finds unfulfilling (although, many jobs have periods of time which are not fulfilling). In marriage a man must often say, "I love my job [or, my boss], my wife and my children—I will continue to work and live here." Do you see the parallel?

In recent times, we have been brought up to think that slavery is the absolute worst sin and human indignity known to mankind. It is not.

First of all, the slavery practiced here in Exodus 21 is not the same as the slavery which split our nation in the 1800's. In many cases, slavery in this era (of Exodus 21) was voluntary. Now, you might wonder, *how could anyone ever volunteer to be enslaved?* Sometimes, that was the only reasonable option for a person who was without personal property or funds.

Secondly, slavery is regulated by the Mosaic Law. What laws constrained southern masters concerning their slaves in America in the 1800s?

Interestingly enough, there have been many modern movements about workers making a *living wage*—and these movements are, for the most part, a front for communism/socialism. Nevertheless, the adherents to this movement are often sincere. They do not appear to understand that there is always a tradeoff when it comes to labor and remuneration for labor. Labor is only worth so much, and when you pay too much for it, the business purchasing the labor will find alternatives (they will build a plant elsewhere; or just close down). Labor is a part of the bottom line for any sort of business. Many times, the cost of labor is the most significant component of the business itself.

In a free market, a business will look to hire workers at such and such a wage, and a worker who applies for that job is accepting the terms of his contract. The worker may not make a lot of money and this may constrain him elsewhere in life, but, he has a modicum of freedom (which includes the option of saying to his boss, *I quit!*).

A slave, on the other hand, is automatically paid a living wage. He gets food, shelter and clothing; so he gets what is necessary for his life. On the other hand, he cannot say, *I quit*, and walk off the job.

In a government-controlled market, people accept what the government offers, they have no choice. They may get what the government designates as basic living benefits; but their actual freedom is very limited (as are the *guaranteed* government benefits).

In the Soviet Union, the government might provide you with food, shelter and clothing (and not much of these), but finding bread may be an impossible chore. A one bedroom apartment may be shared with 10 other unrelated people. Furthermore, people were always under the constant threat of being arrested for acts and words against the state. And if such a person was arrested, he was assumed to be guilty from the start. Sometimes even being able to prove one's innocence was not enough (see *Alexander Dolgun's Story: An American in the Gulag*). Present-day Russia is not too much different.

In a free market, a person accepts what salary and perks are offered—like them or not—but he has the freedom to leave the job and pursue a better employment elsewhere.

Personally, I have no problem with voluntary slavery. A person down on his luck can go to a slave owner (or to a slave auction) and be assured that he will eat, have clothing and a place to sleep. In the Hebrew society, this

arrangement continued only for 6 years (if this was a fellow Hebrew). That is, according to the Law (the Hebrew people did not always follow the Law).

There are many different kinds of slavery. What we think of as slavery (1) exists in greater numbers today than ever before; and (2) is outlawed by Scripture. The Bible calls this sort of slavery *man-stealing*; and this is where a free man in a society is captured and forced into slavery (as many countries have done throughout the centuries). The Hebrew people were not allowed to do this (and this will be addressed in this chapter).

I have not seen a single anti-confederate-soldier-monument group lift a finger to manumit a single person from modern-day slavery. But they are very good at kicking statues. This is because, they may think that they are doing something great and noble, but they are simply pawns in the hands of globalists and communists.

The Hebrew people were, generally speaking, a non-aggressive people. They did not look around them, see land that they wanted, and go out and take it. The exception to this is, obviously, their original conquering of Canaan (see the book of Joshua). God commanded them to take the land, and they did. But once the land was under their control, almost all their wars fought afterwards were reactionary. A country would invade them and they would have to fight and defeat that country in order to maintain their own freedom. As a result of such a war, they would take in more territory from the losing country.

When a country fought an aggressive war against the Hebrews, the Hebrew people could defeat their enemies and then take those who remain alive as slaves. There were limited options when you defeated another country. They could kill all of their enemies or they could enslave those who remained. Although there were laws which regulated this, the laws regulating the enslavement of fellow Hebrew citizens were more restrictive.

Now, let's go back and pick up the context for v. 6:

Exodus 21:5 *But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'...* (NKJV)

Exodus 21:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to bring near, to bring here; to cause to draw near, to cause to approach</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NAY</i> ]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
'el (עַל) [pronounced <i>eh</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

## Exodus 21:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated elohim, Elohim</i>	plural masculine noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...then his master will bring him to the judges [lit., *elohim*] [to say this]...

We have the word *elohim* here, which certainly can be a reference to God (Owens translates it here *God*); but I think the better application is, this is a *board of authorities*, probably *judges*, before whom this slave owner and his slave go. The master brings his slave to these judges, and the slave publically states that he is willing to remain a slave to his master forever.

This does not preclude a slave having previously bargained with his master for a period of time—say, 20, 30 or 40 years. None of this would be off the table. However, the most extreme example is presented. The slave willingly subjects himself to a lifetime of slavery, and he testifies openly to this.

One must also consider that, after a certain age, freedom may become less and less desirable. That is, people do get old, and they cannot work as hard as they used to. Nevertheless, the master continues to provide for them (in many cases, slaves become a part of the family).

As an aside, in various movies and television programs, we have been exposed to the very worst examples of slavery and the abuse of slaves (I am speaking of slavery in the United States before the Civil War). That was not the case for every plantation or any home where a slave might live.<sup>20</sup>

Back to our context:

Exodus 21:6a ...then his master shall bring him to the judges. (NKJV)

So, the slave has told his master, in order to remain married, he will serve his master for the rest of his life. His master brings the slave before judges to confirm this testimony with witnesses.

## Exodus 21:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to bring near, to bring here; to cause to draw near, to cause to approach</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

<sup>20</sup> Domestic slaves often lived inside the houses of their masters and those working in the field were quartered outside



## Exodus 21:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
deleth (דֶּלֶת) [pronounced DEH-lehth]	door, gate; figuratively for a door [gate] [to crocodile jaws]; door [lid of a chest]; lips of men; door [to an easily-accessible woman]	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1817 BDB #195
'ôw (וְ) [pronounced oh]	or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
m <sup>e</sup> zûwzâh (מִזְוֵזָה) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -zoo-SAW]	side post, door-post, gate-post; door frame	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4201 BDB #265

**Translation:** ...and he will bring him near to the door or to the doorpost,...

After the public testimony, the owner brings his slave to his door or doorpost.

## Exodus 21:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râtsa' (רָצָא) [pronounced raw-TSAHG]	to bore [through], to pierce	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7527 BDB #954
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ôzen (אָזֶן) [pronounced OH-zen]	ear; metaphorically for hearing	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #241 BDB #23
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

## Exodus 21:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mar <sup>tsêa</sup> (מַרְצֵא) [pronounced <i>maht-TSAY-ah</i> ]	<i>a boring instrument, an awl</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4836 BDB #954

**Translation:** ...and his master will bore through his ear with an awl,...

The master, as a sign of ownership, will put a hole in the slave's ear. I would assume that some identifying piece of jewelry might be added at this point. This is not stated as a requirement, however.

**An Awl** (a graphic); from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com); accessed July 4, 2019. I use tools, so I know what the text is speaking about. Not everyone does, so I have included the graphic of a modern awl. My guess is, an ancient awl would be a single piece, made of all metal or all wood.



Today, a person might use an awl to create an opening for a screw or a drill; or use it to punch a hole into leather.

It would logically make sense that something else by way of identification would be placed in the earlobe of the slave—an earring or some sort which indicates ownership (I have seen cows with this sort of thing in their ear). Otherwise, the hole would fill in on its own.

The implication here is, there is more done than simply opening up a temporary hole in the ear. Something would be added here as identification of belonging to one's master.

## Exodus 21:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHD</i> ]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>goh-LAWM</i> ]	<i>long duration, forever, everlasting, eternal, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity; what is hidden, hidden time</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

ʿôwlâm together with the lâmed preposition mean *forever, always*.

This is treated as a single word leʿolâm (לְעוֹלָם) [pronounced *leh-goh-LAWM*]; and it means *forever, always*.

**Translation:** ...and he will serve him [his master] forever. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The end result is, the slave (and his wife and children) belong to the master forever.

Exodus 21:6 ...then his master will bring him to the judges [lit., *elohim*] [to say this] and he will bring him near to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve him [his master] forever. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

I realize that some people just bristle at this thought, as if there could be nothing worse in the world than this. Starvation and great poverty would be worse options. The slave certainly knows his options and likes them with his master.

Having a master is not the worst thing in the world. A slave may have a reasonably good life under some masters. If all of his needs are met and he has a wife and family also, this could be a pretty good deal for the man.

**Application:** One of the contradictory positions taken by the left is, slavery is the worst possible outcome for a person's life; and the government should be responsible to provide all of the necessities of an individual's life. In the second premise, a form of slavery has just been described. Part of the condition of a person having the state provide his basic necessities being met is, he must agree to all the rules of the state. That is, he commits to slavery to the state. The more that a state promises to do for the individual, the more that the state can do to that individual.

**Application:** If you are a committed leftist, then you may not grasp this. However, there is no way that a government can provide the basic necessities for everyone, if these people do not work. If, by today's standards, the government said, "Okay, no matter what, you get \$50,000 a year, whether you work or not;" then many people would just stop working. They can make a reasonable life on that amount and without the hassle and worry of working for someone. But, that cannot work for society as a whole. The money does not grow on trees; it comes from someone else's production and hard work. So, if there is a basic income given out, there will be, at some point, a set of basic requirements which must be met. By that I mean, the government will become much more restrictive.

**Application:** I have found such a thing to be very true today. I have found that my medicare has severe limitations, and these limitations were a result of my making a mistake, and this mistake was based upon the words of someone who was in authority. Now, had this person given me true and accurate information, I would have done something else, so that my options were not limited.<sup>21</sup> My point being is, nothing is free; and nothing is unconditional. If the government provides a free handout of money for anything, there will be conditions and there will be consequences.

Vv. 5–6 are an entire thought, but based upon a man marrying while a slave and possibly producing children as a slave:

Exodus 21:5–6 However, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children;" then his master will bring him to the judges, in order for him to make this public declaration. His master will also bring him to the door or to the door post, and then his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master forever after that. (Kukis paraphrase)

It is interesting that the earliest connotation of pierced ears for men is a lifetime of slavery. This mark is a clear indication of a volitional choice which lasts a lifetime. Similarly, when a man chooses a wife, the choice should be for a lifetime. If a man cannot make a commitment to anything for more than a couple weeks (or months or years) then he is not ready to be married. The NASB reasonably interprets the *bringing to God* as bringing the

<sup>21</sup> If you want specifics, I was told that I was paying for medicare part B, which is a requirement; I could see that money was taken out of my check; and I therefore assumed what this person told me was true. Turns out, I did not have Medicare part B and was paying for additional insurance, something I did not need to do. Not having part B limits my options for changing coverage.

slave before the judges who judge in God's stead. This emphasizes the solemnity and permanence of this decision. The same phrasing is found in Exodus 22:8, 9, and 28.

There are two oddities in this passage. The master brings the slave before God (*Elohim*). We understand this to be a reference to *judges acting for God*. The other oddity is, *master* is actually a plural noun throughout—'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced *uh-doh-NAY*]—but affixed to singular verbs.

Exodus 21:5–6 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my Adonai, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his Adonai shall bring him to the Elohim (God). He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his Adonai shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. (NKJV, with substitutions)

Remember that, throughout the Old Testament, there are shadows of what will take place. Our Lord Jesus Christ will take us before God and we will be made servants of our Lord (= Adonai) forever. When following along in the Hebrew, these oddities simply reach out and grab you, which caused me to repeat this passage, but with the Hebrew word substitutions.

There is more here than just the law. Man is in the world of His Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Who created it. In the church age, we choose to be married to our Lord through believing in Christ (the analogy between salvation and marriage is found in Ephesians 5:22–32 Revelation 19:7 21:2, 9). We can choose after salvation to serve God or not;<sup>22</sup> just as this slave can choose to serve his master for the rest of his life. This analogy is further supported by the ending of this verse with the time period *forever*. Obviously a slave cannot serve his master throughout eternity, particularly if one has been regenerated and the other has not. However, this is both a real law which is to be applied and it is also a shadow of our servitude to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Exodus 21:5–6 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. (NKJV)

This is God's Word; it does not matter if you agree with it or not. It does not matter whether this fits in with the way you were raised or not. This was the perfect government for Israel at this time and place. Some of the specific laws might change today, but the principles would remain the same.

Exodus 21:2–6 If you purchase a Hebrew servant, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing. If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, lord, husband, master] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him. If his master gives to him a wife and she bears sons and/or daughters to him, then the wife is [still the property of] her master and he [the slave] will go out by himself. But, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free;" then his master will bring him to the judges [lit., *elohim*] [to say this] and he will bring him near to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve him [his master] forever. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:2–6 If you purchase a Hebrew servant, then he will serve you for six years; however, he will go out free in the seventh year, owing you nothing. If he became your slave as a single man, then he will leave his servitude to you as a single man. If he entered into servitude to you as a married man, then his wife will go out with him—they will both be free. However, if his master gives him a wife (and, let's say, she also bears sons or daughters to him), she is still the property of the master (along with the children). Therefore, in the seventh year, he may go out in freedom, but by himself, as that is the state in which he became a slave. However, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children;" then his master will bring him to the judges, in order for him to make this public declaration. His master will also bring him to the door or to the door post, and then his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master forever after that. (Kukis paraphrase)

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<sup>22</sup> Without regular personal confession of sin directly to God and growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, no one is serving God

This next section, Exodus 21:7–11 deals with a woman being sold into slavery and/or as a potential wife for the owner's sons. It is not until v. 9 where the marriage angle is mentioned.

There are some portions of v. 8 which are problematic; there appears to be a missing negative. There is also a way to work marriage into the translation, but I do not believe that is to be the understanding of this situation.

**And for sells a man his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as go out the slaves [or, *male slaves*]. If she has been evil in eyes of her master, who may not assign [*appoint, espouse*] her, and he will cause to be redeemed to a people foreign, he does not have power to sell her in his deception against her.**

Exodus  
21:7–8

**When a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as the male slaves [to do the same work]. If she is evil in the sight of her master [or, *If she is displeasing to her lord*], he may not reassign her, [and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices.**

**If a man sells his daughter as a maid, she will not be subject to the same work done by the male slaves. If she disappoints her master, he still may not reassign her, selling her to a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her in this way.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And for sells a man his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as go out the slaves [or, <i>male slaves</i> ]. If she has been evil in eyes of her master, who may not assign [ <i>appoint, espouse</i> ] her, and he will cause to be redeemed to a people foreign, he does not have power to sell her in his deception against her.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And when a man selleth his daughter to be a handmaid, she shall not go out as at the outgoing of the men servants. If she be evil in the eyes of the master who had covenanted with her to be his, then shall he make her free; to another man he shall not have ability to sell her to domineer over her.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And if a man of Israel sell his daughter, a little handmaid, she shall not go forth according to the going forth of the servants of the Kenaanaee, who are set at liberty on account of the tooth or the eye; but in the years of remission, and with tokens, and at the jubela, and on the death of her master, and by redemption with money. If she hath not found favour before her master who bought her, then her father may redeem her; but to a foreigner he shall not have power to sell her; for as a vessel of her Lord he hath power over her.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If any man sell his daughter to be a servant, she shall not go out as bondwomen are wont to go out. If she displease the eyes of her master to whom she was delivered, he shall let her go: but he shall have no power to sell her to a foreign nation, if he despise her.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she shall not go out as the male servants do. If she does not please her master, who has married her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, seeing he has dealt deceitfully with her.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.



Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And when a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out free as the menservants do. If her master hates her, so that he will not take her to himself as a wife, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no authority to sell her to a foreign people, because he has dealt deceitfully with her.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if any one sell his daughter as a domestic, she shall not depart as the maid-servants depart. If she be not pleasing to her master, after she has betrothed herself to him, he shall let her go free; but he is not at liberty to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has trifled with her.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And if a man gives his daughter for a price to be a servant, she is not to go away free as the men-servants do. If she is not pleasing to her master who has taken her for himself, let a payment be made for her so that she may go free; her master has no power to get a price for her and send her to a strange land, because he has been false to her.
Easy English	Perhaps a man may sell his daughter as a slave. She is not free to leave her master, as the male slaves are, after six years. Her master has chosen her for himself. If he does not like her, he must let someone from her family buy her from him. He cannot sell her to a foreign person. He has not done what he promised to her.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	“A man might decide to sell his daughter as a slave. If this happens, the rules for making her free are not the same as the rules for making the men slaves free. If the master who chose her for himself is not pleased with her, then he can sell the woman back to her father. If the master broke his promise to marry her, he loses the right to sell her to other people. If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, he must treat her like a daughter, not like a slave.
God's Word™	“Whenever a man sells his daughter into slavery, she will not go free the way male slaves do. If she doesn't please the master who has chosen her as a wife, [Or “master so that he does not choose her as a wife.”] he must let her be bought back by one of her close relatives. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, since he has treated her unfairly.
Good News Bible (TEV)	“If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to be set free, as male slaves are. If she is sold to someone who intends to make her his wife, but he doesn't like her, then she is to be sold back to her father; her master cannot sell her to foreigners, because he has treated her unfairly.
The Message	“When a man sells his daughter to be a handmaid, she doesn't go free after six years like the men. If she doesn't please her master, her family must buy her back; her master doesn't have the right to sell her to foreigners since he broke his word to her.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. “Suppose a man sells his daughter as a servant. Then she can't go free as male servants do. But what if the master who has chosen her does not like her? Then he must let the man buy her back. He has no right to sell her to strangers. He has broken his promise to her. What if he chooses her to marry his son?
New Simplified Bible	»When a man sells his daughter into slavery, she will not go free the way male slaves do. »If she does not please the master who has chosen her as a wife, he must let her be bought back by one of her close relatives. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, since he has treated her unfairly.

Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:



Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	A young woman who was sold by her father doesn't gain her freedom in the same way that a man does. If she doesn't please the man who bought her to be his wife, he must let her be bought back. He cannot sell her to foreigners; this would break the contract he made with her.
The Living Bible	"If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not be freed at the end of six years as the men are. If she does not please the man who bought her, then he shall let her be bought back again; but he has no power to sell her to foreigners, since he has wronged her by no longer wanting her after marrying her.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	"If a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she is not to go free as the male servants do. If she does not please her owner who has taken her for himself, he will take pay for her to be set free. He does not have the right to sell her to a strange people, because he has not been fair to her. If he takes her for his son, he will act toward her as with a daughter.
New Living Translation	"When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not be freed at the end of six years as the men are. If she does not satisfy her owner, he must allow her to be bought back again. But he is not allowed to sell her to foreigners, since he is the one who broke the contract with her.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	If a man sells his daughter to become a slave, she should not be set free after six years as the male slaves are. If the man who bought her wanted her to be his concubine, but if later he is not pleased with her, he must sell her back to her father. He must not sell her to a foreigner because that would be breaking the contract he made with the girl's father.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'And if anyone sells his daughter as a house slave; she may not be sent away as other female slaves are released. For if she has been involved with him and if she thereafter hasn't been found pleasing by him, he may only set her free... he may not sell her to some foreigner after that.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shouldn't be set free in the same way as male slaves are set free. If she doesn't please her master who chose her for himself, then her master must let her be bought back by her family. He has no right to sell her to a foreign people since he has treated her unfairly.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If anyone sells his daughter into a man's service, she is not to go free on the same conditions as a slave.[4] The master to whom she has been made over may send her away, if he has no liking for her, but he may not sell her to foreign masters; he has done her despite enough already. [4] 'As a slave'; a woman slave, according to the Latin translation, which perhaps means to indicate a distinction between concubines and bond-women. But the Hebrew text, more intelligibly, gives 'as a man slave'.
Translation for Translators	If a man sells his daughter to become a slave, she should not be set free <i>after six years</i> , as the male slaves are. If the man who bought her wanted her to be his wife, but if <i>later</i> he is not pleased with her, he must sell her back to her father. He must not sell her to a foreigner, because that would be breaking the contract/agreement <i>he made with the girl's father</i> .

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
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Christian Standard Bible Conservapedia Translation	.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<p>If a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she shall not reclaim her freedom the way a manservant would. If her master is not pleased with her, after he betrothed her to himself, then he will allow her to be ransomed to freedom. He will not have the right to sell her to a foreign people, because he has dealt treacherously with her. Literally, "if she is evil in the eyes of her master," idiomatic for "not to please"</p> <p><b>Law of Marriage.</b></p> <p>' If a man sells his daughter to be a mother, she should not go as if going into slavery. If she is not pleasing in the eyes of her master, when he has not known her, then he shall free her to her own people without a payment; he shall not have power to sell her because of his treachery to her.</p>
God's Truth (Tyndale)	If a man sell his daughter to be a servant: she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, so that he has given her to no man to wife, then shall he let her go free: to sell her unto a strange nation shall he have no power, because he despised her.
HCSB	"When a man sells his daughter as a slave, [Or <i>concubine</i> ] she is not to leave as the male slaves do. If she is displeasing to her master, who chose her for himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners because he has acted treacherously toward her.
International Standard V	<p>"When a man sells his daughter as a servant, she won't go out as the male servants do.<sup>c</sup> If she's displeasing to<sup>d</sup> her master who selected her for himself,<sup>e</sup> he must let her be redeemed. He does not have the right to sell her to foreign people, because he has dealt unfairly<sup>f</sup> with her.</p> <p><b>c</b> 21:7 The Heb. lacks <i>as the male servants do</i></p> <p><b>d</b> 21:8 Lit. <i>bad in the eyes of</i></p> <p><b>e</b> 21:8 i.e. as a secondary wife also called a mistress or concubine</p> <p><b>f</b> 21:8 Or <i>treacherously</i></p>
Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold Lexham English Bible	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>" 'And if a man sells his daughter as a slave woman, she will not go out as male slaves go out. If {she does not please her master} who selected her, he will allow her to be redeemed; he has no authority to sell her to foreign people, since he has dealt treacherously with her.</p>
NIV, ©2011 Peter Pett's translation Unfolding Bible Literal Text Unlocked Literal Bible Urim-Thummim Version	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>If a man sells his daughter to be a female slave she will not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he will let her be ransomed, he has lost his right to sell her to foreigners because he has dealt deceitfully with her.</p>
Wikipedia Bible Project	And if a man will sell his daughter as a slave-woman, she will not leave as the slaves leave. If she is bad in the eyes of her master, who did not intend her, then he passes her on. He has no power to sell her to a foreign nation, in his betrayal of her.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, going out, she shall not go out as the menservants. If she is evil in the eyes of her lord, and he has set an appointment <i>to marry</i> her, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no authority to sell her to a strange people, seeing he has acted deceitfully with her.

New American Bible (2002)	"When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go free as male slaves do. But if her master, who had destined her for himself, dislikes her, he shall let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreigner, since he has broken faith with her. Destined her: intended her as a wife of second rank.
New American Bible (2011)	When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go free as male slaves do. But if she displeases her master, who had designated her* for himself, he shall let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her. * [21:8] <b>Designated her:</b> intended her as a wife of second rank.
New English Bible—1970	When a man sells his daughter into slavery, she shall not go free as a male slave may. If her master has not had intercourse with her and she does not please him, he shall let her be ransomed. He has treated her unfairly and therefore has no right to sell her to strangers.
New Jerusalem Bible	If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not leave as male slaves do. If she does not please her master who intended her for himself, he must let her be bought back: he has not the right to sell her to foreigners, for this would be a breach of faith with her.
New RSV Revised English Bible—1989	. When a man sells his daughter into slavery, she is not to go free as male slaves may. If she proves unpleasing to her master who had designated her for himself, he must let her be redeemed; he has treated her unfairly, and therefore he has no right to sell her to foreigners.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to go free like the men-slaves. If her master married her but decides she no longer pleases him, then he is to allow her to be redeemed. He is not allowed to sell her to a foreign people, because he has treated her unfairly.
exeGeses companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And when a man sells his daughter for a slave-girl, she shall not go out as the male slaves go out. If she is bad in the eyes of her master who has appointed her for himself, he shall allow her redemption. He shall not have power to sell her to a foreign people, in his deceiving her.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And when a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she does not go out as the male servants do. "If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who has engaged her to himself, then he shall let her be ransomed. He shall have no authority to sell her to a foreign people, because of him deceiving her.
Tree of Life Version	.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND IF ANY ONE SELL HIS DAUGHTER AS A DOMESTIC, SHE SHALL NOT DEPART AS THE MAID-SERVANTS DEPART. IF SHE BE NOT PLEASING TO HER MASTER, AFTER SHE HAS BETROTHED HERSELF TO HIM, HE SHALL LET HER GO FREE; BUT HE IS NOT AT LIBERTY TO SELL HER TO A FOREIGN NATION, BECAUSE HE HAS TRIFLED WITH HER.
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Awful Scroll Bible	Was a man to sell his daughter as a maidservant - was she to go out as the male slaves are to go out? - Is she to be displeasing in the eye of her master, who is to have appointed her for himself, she is to have been redeemed. Is he to sell her to an unfamiliar people? - was he to have this power? - It is to be deceitful.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version Darby Translation	. . <p>And if a man shall sell his daughter as a handmaid, she shall not go out as the bondmen go out. If she is unacceptable in the eyes of her master, who had taken her for himself, then shall he let her be ransomed: to sell her unto a foreign people he hath no power, after having dealt unfaithfully with her.</p>
exeGesés companion Bible	<b>JUDGMENTS FOR MAIDS</b> <p>And when a man sells his daughter for a maid, she goes not out as the servants. If she is evil in the eyes of her adoni, who betrothed her to himself, then he redeems her - sells her to a strange people; he has no reign: seeing he deals covertly with her.</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if an ish sell his bat to be an amah (maidservant), she shall not go out as the avadim [go free]. If she please not her adon, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed [i.e., let her freedom be purchased]; to sell her unto an am nochri (foreign people) he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	And when a man shall sell his daughter to be a handmaid, she shall not go out according to the out-going of the men-servants, If she is uncomely in the eyes of her lord, who hath not assigned her in marriage, then shall he suffer her to be redeemed: to a strange people, shall he not have power to sell her in that he hath dealt treacherously with her.
Third Millennium Bible	.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"If a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she shall not go free [after six years] as male servants do. If she does not please her master who has chosen her for himself [as a wife], he shall let her be redeemed [by her family]. He does not have the authority to sell her to a foreign people, because he has been unfair to her.
The Expanded Bible	"·If [or When] a man sells his daughter as a slave, ·the rules for setting her free are different from the rules for setting the male slaves free [ <sup>L</sup> she will not go out like male slaves go out]. If ·the master wanted to marry her but then decided he was not pleased with her [ <sup>L</sup> she does not please her master who designated her for himself], he must let ·one of her close relatives buy her back [ <sup>L</sup> her be redeemed]. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has treated her unfairly.
The Geneva Bible Kretzmann's Commentary	. <p>And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, her position being that of housekeeper and probable concubine, she shall not go out as the men-servants do, that is, not be released in the seventh year, the purpose being that she meanwhile become the wife or the concubine either of the master or of his son. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, that is, who had purchased her with the expectation of making her his wife or concubine, then shall he let her be redeemed by some other man who might desire her for his wife. To sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her, he has broken faith with her, for she came to him, although her father sold her for reasons of poverty, Lev. 25:39, with the understanding that she was to occupy the</p>

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

position of wife or concubine. Hebrew girls were not to be sold into unconditional slavery to members of other nations.

*Women are to be treated differently.* If a man decides to sell his daughter as a slave, she will not be freed as male slaves are *when the seventh year arrives*. If for *any reason* she does not please her master who handpicked her *for a wife*, then he is to allow her to be bought *by another*. He has no right to sell her to a foreign people because he has broken the agreement with her.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

Now if a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she shall not go free as the slaves go free.

**Now if a man sells his daughter as a maidservant:** Scripture is referring [here] to a minor girl. I might think that even if she develops signs [of initial puberty, the father may sell her]. [But] you must agree that a kal vachomer [the inference of a major rule from a minor rule] applies here namely if she who is already sold goes free with signs [that is, when she has signs of initial puberty], as it is written: “she shall go out for nothing, without money” (Exod. 21:11), which we interpret as referring to the signs of initial puberty, does it not make sense that she who is not sold [and has initial signs of puberty] should not be sold [at all]? -[From Mechilta, Arachin 29a] [At the moment when a female has two pubic hairs, usually when she is twelve years old, she is no longer considered a minor. She is then called הַרְעָה. She is, however, still under her father’s jurisdiction until six months later, when her breasts have developed to a certain stage. Then she is called תַּרְגֻּמָּה, a mature girl. In the case of a Hebrew maidservant, the father may sell her only when she is a minor, not after she has become a הַרְעָה]

**she shall not go free as the slaves go free:** [I.e.,]-like the emancipation of Canaanite slaves, who go free because of [the loss of] a tooth or an eye. [See below, verses 26, 27.] This one [a Hebrew maidservant], however, will not go free because of [the loss of] a tooth or an eye, but she will work for [her complete] six years or until the Jubilee year or until she develops signs [of initial puberty]. Whichever comes first will be the first [event] to effect her emancipation, and [her master] will reimburse her for the value of her eye or the value of her tooth. Or perhaps this is not so [i.e., the intention of the verse], but “she shall not go free as the [male] slaves go free” [meaning] after six years or in the Jubilee year? Therefore, the Torah states: “Should your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, be sold to you...” (Deut. 15:12). This compares the Hebrew woman to the Hebrew man in regard to all the ways he can be emancipated: just as a Hebrew man goes free following six years [of service] or in the Jubilee year, so too does a Hebrew woman go free following six years [of service] or in the Jubilee year. What then is the meaning of “she shall not go free as the slaves go free” ? [This means] she shall not go free with [the loss of] the tips of her limbs, as do the Canaanite slaves. I might think [then] that [only a Hebrew maidservant does not go free due to the loss of the tips of her limbs, but] a Hebrew man does go free with [the loss of] the tips of his limbs. [Therefore, the Torah] compares the Hebrew man to the Hebrew woman: just as the Hebrew woman does not go free with [the loss of] the tips of her limbs, neither does the Hebrew man go free with [the loss of] the tips of his limbs. — [From Mechilta]

If she is displeasing to her master, who did not designate her [for himself], then he shall enable her to be redeemed; he shall not rule over her to sell her to another person, when he betrays her.

**If she is displeasing to her master:** [Meaning] that she does not please him to the extent that he would [want to] marry her. — [From Mechilta]



**who did not designate her:** For he should have designated her and married her, and the money paid for her purchase is the money of her betrothal. Here Scripture hints that it is a mitzvah [for the master] to perform *ידוע*, designation for marriage, [with the maidservant] and it hints that she would not require any other betrothal. [I.e., neither money nor articles of value would have to be given to the girl's father in order to marry her. The money the father originally received for selling his daughter now would become the money of betrothal from her master.]-[From Kid. 19b]

**he shall enable her to be redeemed:** [This means] he [the master] should give her the opportunity to be redeemed and go free, for he too assists in her redemption. Now what is this opportunity that he gives her? That he deducts from her redemption, according to the number of years that she worked for him, as if she had been hired by him [and was not a slave]. How so? Let us say that he bought her for a maneh [one hundred zuz], and she worked for him for two years. We say to him, "You knew that she would ultimately leave at the end of six years. This means that you bought each year's work for one-sixth of a maneh, and she has worked for you for two years, which equals one-third of a maneh. Accept two-thirds of a maneh [from her, to pay for the remaining four years] and let her leave you." -[from Kid. 14b]

**to another person:** Heb. *יִרְכַּנּוּ פָּעֵל*. [Meaning] that neither the master nor the father has the right to sell her to anyone else. — [from Kid. 18a]

**when he betrays her:** If he [the master] comes to betray her and not fulfill the commandment of designation, and the father, too, since he betrayed her and sold her to this one.

Kaplan Translation

#### *The Hebrew Maidservant*

If a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she shall not be freed as male servants are released. Her master should provisionally designate her as his bride, and if she is not pleasing to him, he must let her be redeemed. He is considered to have broken faith with her, and he therefore does not have the right to sell her to anyone else.

#### **maidservant**

This can only be done with a minor girl (Mekhilta; Rashi). It was permitted for a man to sell his minor daughter only when he was absolutely destitute with no possible means of support (Kiddushin 20a; Yad, Avadim 4:2).

#### **should**

(Kiddushin 19a). The master does this by declaring, 'you are my designated bride' (Yad, Avadim 4:7).

#### **He**

The master. Also, her father may not sell her again (Hirsch; Torah Temimah). See note, this verse, 'anyone else.'

#### **anyone else**

(Rashi; Yad, Avadim 4:10). Literally, 'to a foreign nation' (Mekhilta; Ramban). It can also denote, 'to someone unsuitable for marriage' (Hirsch). It would then be a general commandment that the father is not permitted to sell his daughter to a gentile or to anyone else who could not possibly marry her.

"If a man sells his daughter<sup>15</sup> as a female servant,<sup>16</sup> she will not go out as the male servants do. If she does not please<sup>17</sup> her master, who has designated her<sup>18</sup> for himself, then he must let her be redeemed.<sup>19</sup> He has no right<sup>20</sup> to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has dealt deceitfully<sup>21</sup> with her.

<sup>15sn</sup> This paragraph is troubling to modern readers, but given the way that marriages were contracted and the way people lived in the ancient world, it was a good provision for people who might want to find a better life for their daughter. On the subject in general for this chapter, see W. M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women*, 31-64.



<sup>16tn</sup> The word אַמָּה ('amah) refers to a female servant who would eventually become a concubine or wife; the sale price included the amount for the service as well as the bride price (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 621). The arrangement recognized her honor as an Israelite woman, one who could be a wife, even though she entered the household in service. The marriage was not automatic, as the conditions show, but her treatment was safeguarded come what may. The law was a way, then, for a poor man to provide a better life for a daughter.

<sup>17tn</sup> Heb “and if unpleasant (רָעָה, ra'ah) in the eyes of her master.”

<sup>18tn</sup> The verb יָדַע (ya'ad) does not mean “betroth, espouse” as some of the earlier translations had it, but “to designate.” When he bought the girl, he designated her for himself, giving her and her family certain expectations.

<sup>19tn</sup> The verb is a Hiphil perfect with vav (ו) consecutive from פָּדָה (padah, “to redeem”). Here in the apodosis the form is equivalent to an imperfect: “let someone redeem her” – perhaps her father if he can, or another. U. Cassuto says it can also mean she can redeem herself and dissolve the relationship (Exodus, 268).

<sup>20tn</sup> Heb “he has no authority/power,” for the verb means “rule, have dominion.”

<sup>21sn</sup> The deceit is in not making her his wife or concubine as the arrangement had stipulated.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and (if) a man will sell his daughter (as) a bondwoman, she will not go out like the going out of the servants, if she is dysfunctional in the eyes of her lord, which he did not appoint , (then) he will ransom her, he will not regulate to sell her in his treacherous act (with) her,...
Charles Thomson OT	When any man selleth his daughter to be a handmaid she shall not go away as those who are in bondage go. If she please not her master provided he betrothed her for himself, he shall let her be redeemed; but he is not her master to sell her into another family, because he hath broken covenant with her:...
C. Thompson (updated) OT Context Group Version	. And if a man sells his daughter to be a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. If she doesn't please her master, who has espoused her to himself, then he shall let her be ransomed: to sell her to a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he has dealt deceitfully with her.
English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	If a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she shall not go out as the male servants do. If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He has no authority to sell her to a foreign nation, because he has dealt deceitfully with her.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	“If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to <sup>[e]</sup> go free as the male slaves <sup>[f]</sup> do. If she is <sup>[g]</sup> displeasing in the eyes of her master <sup>[h]</sup> who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his <sup>[i]</sup> unfairness to her. e. Exodus 21:7 Lit <i>go out</i> f. Exodus 21:7 Lit <i>go out</i> g. Exodus 21:8 Lit <i>bad</i> h. Exodus 21:8 Another reading is <i>so that he did not designate her</i> i. Exodus 21:8 Lit <i>dealing treacherously</i>
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.

## A Voice in the Wilderness

And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves go out. If she is disagreeable to the eye of her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no power to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her.

Webster's Bible Translation .

World English Bible .

Young's Literal Translation .

Young's Updated LT

"And when a man sells his daughter for a handmaid, she does not go out according to the going out of the men-servants; if evil in the eyes of her lord, so that he has not betrothed her, then he has let her be ransomed; to a strange people he has not power to sell her, in his dealing treacherously with her.

**The gist of this passage:**

If a man sells his daughter as a female slave (or accepts a dowry price for her), she is not to be treated like the male slaves. If she is not acceptable to that family, then she may not be sold to foreigners, but she may be redeemed.

7-8

**Exodus 21:7a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i> ]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bath</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced <i>aw-MAW</i> ]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #519 BDB #51

**Translation:** When a man sells his daughter as a maidservant,...

I believe that there are assumptions which we can make here. I believe that the father of the daughter being sold and the master are both Hebrew men. After all, these are God's laws for the Hebrew people.

Quite obviously, the man who is selling his daughter is unable to get her married, either in the near or the far future, for whatever reason. Perhaps he cannot afford her dowry, etc. Perhaps his family is in bad financial shape—that would be the likely situation.

The Bible in Basic English suggests that the woman is sold for *the price of* a servant. I mention this here, and will later explain what else might be going on.

Even though the words do not specifically say this, I believe that we can understand that someone has paid a dowry price for this daughter. I believe that we are covering the possibility that the original agreement was for a daughter to marry or with the option of marriage. However, this agreement seems to be structured in such a way that, this young lady will be a slave for a period of time and may or may not marry into this family.

As I see it, based upon the entire context, the parents could not afford the young woman. They are responsible for her, but could not even raise a dowry amount. She is sold to another family to be taken care of. After she enters the new household, there are a variety of options which are given.

Exodus 21:7b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לו' or לא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâtsâ' (יצא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
yâtsâ' (יצא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
<sup>e</sup> bâdîym (עֲבָדִים) [pronounced <i>ge<sup>b</sup>-vaw-DEEM</i> ]	<i>slaves, servants; workers; underlings; subjects; slavery, bondage, servitude; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** ...she will not go out as the male slaves [to do the same work].

This woman is not to be mistreated or treated like a manservant. God makes a normal distinction between men and women (as all of our sports did at one time).

Now, in my first reading of this, I understood that she would not be expected to do the same work as the men. Others understood that the woman could not be sold or placed elsewhere as males slaves are.

The slave owner is not to take advantage of the weakness of the female.

Again, slavery in this era was normal; and it was going to be practiced. God designed laws which protected the slaves. Although I have not made a personal study of this topic in other national laws, I would be surprised to find slaves being given any similar protections in other cultures or nations.

Exodus 21:7 *When a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as the male slaves [to do the same work].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

For some women, the Bible will make them grind their teeth. Some people, men and women alike, try to put the Bible strictly into the culture from whence they came and claim that these were the unevolved laws and perceptions and culture of Moses and Paul (since Paul was equally *unenlightened* in their eyes). Moses and Paul recorded God's Word and even though some specifics might change, the principles do not. Men and women are entirely different creatures with different positions and stations in life. It has nothing to do with being better or worse, with being inferior or superior in intellectual or in physical abilities—it has to do with the fact that we are different creatures and God has a different plan for men and women in this life. It goes back to the creation of Adam and the woman and their original sins. Like it or not, the man has authority over the woman in marriage. Furthermore, there are many instances of men and women being subjected to and held to different standards in the Bible. If no such double standard is revealed in the Word, then we may assume that a principle stated for a man applies to a woman and vice versa.

In this situation, a man has chosen to sell his own daughter into slavery. This in of itself is quite the solemn decision. There is nothing like the bond between a man and his daughter. However, in the rare case where this is done, then the woman does not have the same privilege to leave the position of slavery after seven years of service. This means to a Hebrew male in slavery, there is no reason to get married other than love and a lifelong dedication, because this woman is a slave for life. Only the master has the volition to free her.

When I first examined Exodus 21:8 in the English, I must admit that I did not fully understand what was going on. Owen writes: *If she does not please (in the sight of) her master who has (not) designated her, then he shall let her be redeemed to a foreign people. He shall have no right to sell her since he has dealt faithlessly with her.*<sup>23</sup> NASB: *If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, the he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her.* We will need to dissect this verse, phrase by phrase.

Exodus 21:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾim (אם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
râʿa (רא) [pronounced raw-ĠAHĠ]	<i>to make a loud noise; to be evil [from the idea of raging or being tumultuous]; to be bad, to displease; possibly to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter; to be worse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7489 BDB #949

<sup>23</sup> I have added the punctuation

## Exodus 21:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Some translators understand this to be the word used:			
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-ĠAW]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine singular adjective/noun	Strong's #7451 BDB #949
bê (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced ġay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bêyth preposition and the construct form 'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced ġay-nah-YIM], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of, in the view of; as _____ sees things to be, in the sight of</i> .			
'ădônâi (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

**Translation:** *If she is evil in the sight of her master* [or, *If she is displeasing to her lord*],...

Exodus 21:8a *If she does not please her master*,... (NKJV)

This verse begins with an hypothetical particle which is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect of rā'a' (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-ĠAHĠ], a word which can mean *to be evil, bad*. However, Zodhiates and the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance list this as the adjective ra' (רָעָה) [pronounced raġ] (which, in the feminine, is rā'a' (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-ĠAHĠ] and it means *evil, misery, distress*. I am certain this is similar to a case which we have previously looked at where there are differences in opinion as to whether the masculine and feminine are different words and whether the word is a verb, an adjective or a noun, or an adjective acting as a substantive. However, in any case, she is *displeasing* (an alternate meaning born out by Numbers 11:16 22:34 Joshua 24:15 Proverbs 24:18). Sometimes, the feminine gender seems to soften the meaning of the word in the Hebrew.

Let's look at a more literal rendering of this verse:

Exodus 21:8a *If she is evil in the sight of her master* [or, *If she is displeasing to her lord*],... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This does not mean that the woman herself is evil; nor does it mean that she is doing a substandard job. It means that her master has determined that she is not a good maidservant—and for whatever reason. He may or may not have a legitimate reason for coming to this conclusion. The operative phrase is, *in the sight of*. So, this is his expressed opinion, which may or may not be accurate or reasonable.

This appears to mean, there is a woman servant and her master finds her to be displeasing.

Exodus 21:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâ'ad (יָאֵד) [pronounced yaw-ĠAHD]	<i>to appoint, to assign, to designate; to point out; to define; to espouse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3259 BDB #416

**Translation:** ...he may not reassign her,...

Exodus 21:8b ...who has betrothed her to himself,... (NKJV)

I have a different translation, which is going to change up the interpretation considerably:

Exodus 21:8b ...he may not reassign her,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

These are obviously very different approaches, so what do we find in the Hebrew?

The word often translated *designated* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix of yâ'ad (יָאֵד) [pronounced yaw-ĠAHD] and it means *to appoint, to assign*—especially insofar as acquiring or designating as wife. With this verb is the negative lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]. It negates the meaning of the verb. So he may not appoint or assign her (to something).

Now, who exactly are we talking about? In v. 7, we have a man who sells his daughter. This would be a rare circumstance, but it would happen (I have suggested that great poverty might be the cause of this).

There is a lot more happening here than simply selling a slave to a slave buyer. This is a father who cannot care for his daughter and, therefore, must sell her. She is not simply being sold in a way that she become a commodity, but the father is entrusting the care of his daughter to another man (another family); and this becomes a permanent situation. This provides stability for the young woman, even though she will potentially be a servant for the rest of her life.

The new master cannot say, "This woman is worthless" and then use that claim to justify selling her. The Law does not allow that. He may not assign her to another family. That is, he may not sell her to another family. Again, she is not a commodity to be bought and sold.

Exodus 21:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251



Exodus 21:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pâdâh (פָּדָה) [pronounced paw-DAWH]	<i>to cause to be ransomed [redeemed, purchased], to allow to be ransomed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6299 BDB #804
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘am (עַם) [pronounced ġahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
nōk <sup>e</sup> rîy (נֹכְרִי) [pronounced nawck <sup>e</sup> -REE or nohk-REE]	<i>foreign, alien, stranger; strange; foreign woman, a harlot; of another family; metaphorically, unknown, unfamiliar; new, unheard of</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5237 BDB #648

This has that odd vowel games-hartuf (ō as in cost) that looks exactly like a qâmats (â as in car).

**Translation:** ...[and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people.

Exodus 21:8c ...then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people,... (NKJV)

I understand v. 8c in a different way:

Exodus 21:8c ...[and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people.

You see, I carry the negative from the previous phrase into this one.

Here we have the conjunction is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular of pâdâh (פָּדָה) [pronounced paw-DAWH] and it means *ransom, redeem*. It is in the causative stem. This is not followed by a new sentence but the sentence is continued with the words *to a foreign people* (the literal translation of the next two or three words<sup>24</sup>).

So he is causing her to be redeemed and it is *to a foreign people*; and the negative of the previous phrase applies here as well. The man cannot *cause her to be redeemed to a foreign people*.

In the alternative, this allows for the woman to be redeemed, meaning someone can purchase her to remove her from slavery. This could be a kinsman-redeemer (a near relative who does this on her behalf); and it could be a man wanting to marry her. See the doctrine of the **Kinsman-Redeemer** (by Pastor Ken Reed) ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

<sup>24</sup> Some would not count the lâmed preposition as a separate word.

So, I am caught between two opinions here. If the person who bought the young lady originally has decided that he is displeased with her, (1) she cannot be purchased for a foreign people or (2) she may be purchased out of slavery, but not bought by a foreign family. As I look more closely at this, I lean toward the second interpretation.

In any case, this master does not have carte blanc over the life of his slaves—particularly over his Hebrew slaves; and particularly, not over his female Hebrew slaves. God is placing severe limitations on the slave owner.

I would not be surprised to find that such laws—laws which actually limit the power and authority of the slave owner—are exclusive to Hebrew culture. Remember, even in the southern states of the United States, I don't know if there were any laws which limited the slave owners as to what they could and could not do.

In this particular case, the slave owner cannot simply sell the woman in question to a foreign person (who might end up giving him a higher price than what he paid), even if he is dissatisfied with her.

Furthermore, this is the limitation on the slave-owner, whether the woman is not doing a good job; or if her master says/thinks she is not doing a good job. Obviously, he might be able to get a much better price and then want to sell her. He can simply claim that she is not meeting his expectations. Therefore, that option is not left open to him.

**Application:** I was commiserating with a friend the other day that, sometimes in life, you get some bad bosses. In my life as an employee, I had 2 or 3 really good bosses who stand out in my mind (and I am not saying that I had 2 or 3 really nice bosses, because I butted heads with the good bosses at times, me being who I am). The others I found to be so-so, two-faced, or lousy. Nevertheless, we still have authorities under whom we function, whether they are good or not.

Similarly, there would be good and lousy slave owners.

This is a general rule about slave owners, which is not factoring in if they are good or bad as owners. God simply sets a layer of conditions and restrictions upon the slave owners here.

Exodus 21:8d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâshal (מָשַׁל) [pronounced maw-HAHL]	<i>to rule, to have dominion, to reign, to have power over; possibly, to have the right to [do something]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4910 BDB #605
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced maw-KAHR]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

## Exodus 21:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bâgad (בָּגַד) [pronounced baw-GAHD]	<i>to behave deceitfully, to act covertly, to act fraudulently, to act in bad faith, to behave faithlessly; to oppress, to afflict</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #898 BDB #93
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bēyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

**Translation:** He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices.

Exodus 21:8d ...since he has dealt deceitfully with her. (NKJV)

My translation is quite a bit different:

Exodus 21:8d He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices.

This sentence begins with the negative lō' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]. When that is the first word of a sentence, it means *definitely not*. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of māshal (מָשַׁל) [pronounced maw-HAHL], which means, *to rule, to have dominion, to reign, to have power over; possibly, to have the right to [do something]*. Strong's #4910 BDB #605. With the negative, this means that this man definitely does not have the right or the authority to do something. That *something* is defined by the lamed preposition following by the Qal infinitive construct of mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced maw-KAHR], which means, *to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]*. Strong's #4376 BDB #569. So this man, the master, does not have the right to sell this woman. We know we are talking about this woman because there is a feminine singular suffix tacked onto the Qal infinitive verb.

This is followed by the bēyth preposition (*in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of*) which is affixed to the Qal infinitive construct of the verb bâgad (בָּגַד) [pronounced baw-GAHD], which means, *to behave deceitfully, to act covertly, to act fraudulently, to act in bad faith*. Strong's #898 BDB #93. We know that it is the master who is behaving deceitfully or acting in bad faith because the Qal infinitive verb is affixed to a masculine singular suffix.

The master of this woman, the woman who was sold by her father, does not have the authority to sell her by this deceptive practice. In other words, he cannot allege that she is a bad servant and then sell her as a result.

The concept here is much different from selling a commodity. The young woman belongs to a family who simply cannot afford to support her and they sell her to a family who is accepting her as a slave, but with the idea that they will support her and take care of her over the long term (they will do what her own family could not do). This helps to explain all of the restrictions which are placed upon the slave owner.

Exodus 21:8d He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The owner cannot just simply sell a Hebrew maidservant to anyone, no matter what reason he gives.

Interestingly enough, God here is acknowledging bad business practices.

Now, here is what I think might be going on. A successful person pays a dowry for a woman, either for himself or for one of his sons. The woman is delivered to him and he decides that she is not what he wants; so then he claims, "I just purchased her as a slave girl and so I will treat her as such." This passage tells us, it doesn't matter. No matter what the transaction was, since this is a woman, she will be under very specific regulations. This regulation makes it so a man cannot pretend that he is paying the dowry for a woman, and then turn her into a slave just like a male slave. He cannot treat her as he would treat a male slave.

She must produce as a member of this family. She does not get to lay in bed and eat bon bons all day. However, the laws we are studying limit the slave-owner, not her.

We have one grammatical problem in v. 8. It is written *lo'* (not) but read *lo* (for himself). Some codices (western Aramaic, Syriac and Septuagint) read *for himself*; in seven early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible and the Samaritan Pentateuch, it is written and read *not*. Remove the *not*, and it would read "If she has not been pleasing in the sight of her master, who had designated her for himself in marriage and he will cause her to be redeemed to a foreign people, then he will have no authority to sell her since he has dealt deceitfully with her."

Bear in mind that these are words written down 3500 years ago, and then these words were copied perhaps 50–100 times. So, now again, even though the preservation of the text was excellent, there are a few verses here or there which may be difficult to sort out.

Exodus 21:8 If she is evil in the sight of her master [or, If she is displeasing to her lord], he may not reassign her, [and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The man has purchased her, but chosen not to marry her or to give her to one of his sons. He still has the responsibility to take care of this young lady and he cannot sell her as a commodity to foreigners.

Exodus 21:7–8 When a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as the male slaves [to do the same work]. If she is evil in the sight of her master [or, If she is displeasing to her lord], he may not reassign her, [and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This law protects the daughter from being purchased under false pretenses. He purchases her with the idea that she would become his wife or concubine (or possibly that she would at least become the wife of one of his slaves or of one of his sons). He has come across a family which is in desperate straits and made an offer. However, what the man cannot do is later sell her to a foreigner. He cannot purchase this young woman and give the parents a false idea of what would occur. The slave owner cannot deal deceitfully with her, as these are the laws and regulations which protect the woman, even in such difficult circumstances. The master does not have the power or authority to sell her to someone else either as a wife or as a slave.

The purchase of any slave involves a certain amount of capital and the master here had intentions of making money on his investment. However, God does not allow anyone to buy this young woman under false pretenses. He cannot change his mind concerning his purpose in purchasing her. This law forbids, in general, unethical business practices, although it is admittedly limited in scope here.

Exodus 21:7–8 If a man sells his daughter as a maid, she will not be subject to the same work done by the male slaves. If she disappoints her master, he still may not reassign her, selling her to a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her in this way. (Kukis paraphrase)

Although this passage may not seem to specifically speak of marriage, we have marriage clearly a part of the context with the passage which follows:

You may have read vv. 7–8 and my explanation, and thought to yourself, *there is no mention of marriage here*. Then God continues with this same topic, and it is clear that it is all about marriage.

**And if to his son he assigns her in a judgment of the daughters, he does to her. If another [woman] he takes to himself [in marriage], her food and her clothing and her marriage rights will not be withdrawn. And if three of these he does not do for her, and she will go out freely [with] no money [given as payment to him].**

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**If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters. If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*]. If he does not do these three things for her, then she will go out freely without cost [freely no silver (required)].**

**Let's say her owner assigns her in marriage to one of his sons, and all the preparations are done for her. If the son takes on another wife in marriage, her support must be maintained (her food, shelter, clothing and marriage rights). If the owner does not do these things for her, then she may leave that family, freely and without cost.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And if to his son he assigns her in a judgment of the daughters, he does to her. If another [woman] he takes to himself [in marriage], her food and her clothing and her marriage rights will not be withdrawn. And if three of these he does not do for her, and she will go out freely [with] no money [given as payment to him].
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And if he hath covenanted her to his son, after the custom of the daughters of Israel shall he act towards her. And if he take another to him, her food, her raiment, and her marriage due he shall not restrain. And if these three he doth not perform to her, he shall release her freely without money.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And if he had intended her for the side of his son, he shall do by her after the manner of the daughters of Israel. If he take another daughter of Israel to him beside her, her food, her adorning, and her conjugal rights, he shall not withhold from her. [JERUSALEM. And if he take another wife beside her, of her food, her adorning, and her going in and coming out with him, he shall not deprive her.] And if these three things he doth not for her, to covenant her to himself, or to his son, or to release her into the hand of her father, she shall go free without payment, and a writing of release he shall give her.
Revised Douay-Rheims	But if he have betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. And if he take another wife for him, he shall provide her a marriage, and raiment, neither shall he refuse the price of her chastity. If he do not these three things, she shall go out free without money.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	If he marries her to his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marital rights. If he does not do these three things for her, she may go free without paying any money.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And if he takes her for wife to his son, then he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he takes to himself another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her

clothes, and her conjugal rights. And if he does not these three things to her, then she shall go out free without price.

Updated Brenton (Greek) And if he should have betrothed her to his son, he shall do to her according to the right of daughters. And if he take another to himself, he shall not deprive her of necessities and her apparel, and her companionship with him. And if he will not do these three things to her, she shall go out free without money.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And if he gives her to his son, he is to do everything for her as if she was his daughter. And if he takes another woman, her food and clothing and her married rights are not to be less. And if he does not do these three things for her, she has the right to go free without payment.

Easy English If the man chooses the girl to be his son's wife, she must become like his daughter. If the man marries another woman, he must not forget the first woman. He must continue to give her food and clothes. He must be kind to her because she is still his wife. If he does not do these three things, she can leave him. She does not have to pay him any money. [Some translations, like the Easy English translation, understand vv. 7–9 to describe one set of conditions, and vv. 10–11 to describe another (although these situations may be related).]

Easy-to-Read Version–2001 .

Easy-to-Read Version–2006 If the master broke his promise to marry her, he loses the right to sell her to other people. If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, he must treat her like a daughter, not like a slave.

“If the master marries another woman, he must not give less food or clothing to the first wife. And he must continue to give her what she has a right to have in marriage. The man must do these three things for her. If he does not, the woman is made free, and it will cost her nothing. She owes no money to the man.

God's Word™

But if he has chosen her for his son, he must treat her like a daughter. If that son marries another woman, he must not deprive the first wife of food, clothes, or sex. If he doesn't give her these three things, she can go free, without paying any money for her freedom. [This is an odd place to separate the thoughts—between vv. 10 and 11.]

Good News Bible (TEV)

If a man buys a female slave to give to his son, he is to treat her like a daughter. If a man takes a second wife, he must continue to give his first wife the same amount of food and clothing and the same rights that she had before. If he does not fulfill these duties to her, he must set her free and not receive any payment.

The Message

If he turns her over to his son, he has to treat her like a daughter. If he marries another woman, she retains all her full rights to meals, clothing, and marital relations. If he won't do any of these three things for her, she goes free, for nothing.

Names of God Bible  
NIRV

. What if her master marries another woman? He must still give the first one her food and clothes and sleep with her. If he does not provide her with those three things, she can go free. She does not have to pay anything.

New Simplified Bible

»If a man buys a female slave to give to his son, he should treat her like a daughter. »If a man takes a second wife, he must continue to give his first wife the same amount of food and clothing and the same rights that she had before. »If he fails to do any of these things, she should be given her freedom without cost.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible .



College Press Bible Study Contemporary English V.	.	If he selects her as a wife for his son, he must treat her as his own daughter. If the man later marries another woman, he must continue to provide food and clothing for the one he bought and to treat her as a wife. If he fails to do any of these things, she must be given her freedom without cost.
The Living Bible		And if he arranges an engagement between a Hebrew slave girl and his son, then he may no longer treat her as a slave girl, but must treat her as a daughter. If he himself marries her and then takes another wife, he may not reduce her food or clothing, or fail to sleep with her as his wife. If he fails in any of these three things, then she may leave freely without any payment.
New Berkeley Version New Life Version	.	If he takes her for his son, he will act toward her as with a daughter. If he marries again, her food, clothing and marriage rights are to stay the same. And if he will not do these three things for her, then she may go free, without paying any money.
New Living Translation		But if the slave's owner arranges for her to marry his son, he may no longer treat her as a slave but as a daughter. "If a man who has married a slave wife takes another wife for himself, he must not neglect the rights of the first wife to food, clothing, and sexual intimacy. If he fails in any of these three obligations, she may leave as a free woman without making any payment. [The NLT understands vv. 7–9 to describe one situation; and vv. 10–11 to describe another (although they may be related).]
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	.	
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.	

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible		And if he has obtained the woman for his son, he must treat her as his own daughter. But if he has taken her for himself, he must never deprive her of her clothing, her needs, or her companionship with him. If he refuses to do any of these three things for her, she must be set free at no cost.
Beck's American Translation	.	
Common English Bible		If he assigns her to his son, he must give her the rights of a daughter. If he takes another woman for himself, he may not reduce her food, clothing, or marital rights. If he doesn't do these three things for her, she will go free without any payment, for no money.
New Advent (Knox) Bible		He may betroth her, if he will, to his son; but if he does that, he must treat her as his daughter; and if he finds his son another wife instead, he must marry the girl off, and give her clothes, and make all amends for the loss of her virginity.[5] If he is not prepared to do these three things, then she must go free, with no ransom paid for her. [5] The sense of the Hebrew text is rather that if the owner himself takes a new wife, he must provide the concubine with food and clothing, and must still live with her.
Translation for Translators		If the man who buys her wants her to be a wife for his son, he must then treat her as though she were his own daughter. If the master takes another slave girl to be another wife for himself, he must continue to give the first slave wife the same amount of food and clothing that he gave to her before, and he must continue to have sex [EUP] with her as before. If he does not do all these three things for her, he must free her <i>from being a slave</i> , and she is not required to pay anything <i>for being set free</i> .

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.

Conservapedia Translation	If he has betrothed her to his son, then he must treat her like a daughter. If he takes another wife, then he will not diminish anything from his obligation to provide her food, clothing, and shelter. If he is not willing to provide these three things to her, she will reclaim her freedom and owe him no money.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But if she has borne a child to him, then he shall treat her according to the law about wives. If he takes another to. her, he shall not diminish her share for clothing, and conjugal rights. And if a third to these, be shall not send her away destitute, without money.”
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	If he have promised her unto his son to wife, he shall deal with her as men do with their daughters. If he take him another wife, yet her food, raiment and duty of marriage shall he not minish. If he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free and pay no money.
HCSB International Standard V	. If he has selected her for his son, <sup>g</sup> he is to treat her according to the ordinance for daughters. If he takes another woman for himself, he may not withhold from the first <sup>h</sup> her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. If he does not do these three things for her, she may go out without paying anything at all.” <sup>i</sup> <b>g</b> 21:9 i.e. as a secondary wife also called a mistress or concubine <b>h</b> 21:10 The Heb. lacks from the first <b>i</b> 21:11 The Heb. lacks at all
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.
Peter Pett’s translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	And if he has betrothed her to his son, he must give her the rights of a daughter. If he acquires for himself another woman, her food, her clothing and her conjugal rights will not be diminished. But if he does not do these three things for her then she will go out free with no payment of money.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And if to his son he will intend her, he will do to her as is the law for daughters. If he takes another for himself, her portions, her clothing, and her conjugal time he will not diminish. And if he did not these three things for her, and she got out at no cost, no money.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And if he has set an appointment for her with his son, he shall deal with her after the judgment of daughters. If he takes him another wife, he shall not scrape away from her, her food, her clothing, and her rights of cohabitation. And if he does not do these three to her, then she shall go out free, not for silver.
New American Bible (2002)	If he destines her for his son, he shall treat her like a daughter. If he takes another wife, he shall not withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. If he does not grant her these three things, she shall be given her freedom absolutely, without cost to her.
New American Bible (2011)	If he designates her for his son, he shall treat her according to the ordinance for daughters. If he takes another wife, he shall not withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. If he does not do these three things for her, she may leave without cost, without any payment.

New English Bible—1970	If he assigns her to his son, he shall allow her the rights of a daughter. If he takes another woman, he shall not deprive the first of meat, clothes, and conjugal rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she shall go free without any payment.
New Jerusalem Bible	If he intends her for his son, he must treat her as custom requires daughters to be treated. If he takes another wife, he must not reduce the food, clothing or conjugal rights of the first one. Should he deprive her of these three things she will leave a free woman, without paying compensation.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	If he has her marry his son, then he is to treat her like a daughter. If he marries another wife, he is not to reduce her food, clothing or marital rights. If he fails to provide her with these three things, she is to be given her freedom without having to pay anything.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And if he has engaged her to his son, he is to do to her as is the right of daughters. "If he takes another wife, her food, her covering, and her marriage rights are not to be diminished. "And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out for naught, without silver.
Tree of Life Version	.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND IF HE SHOULD HAVE BETROTHED HER TO HIS SON, HE SHALL DO TO HER ACCORDING TO THE RIGHT OF DAUGHTERS. AND IF HE TAKE ANOTHER TO HIMSELF, HE SHALL NOT DEPRIVE HER OF NECESSARIES AND HER APPAREL, AND HER COMPANIONSHIP WITH HIM. AND IF HE WILL NOT DO THESE THREE THINGS TO HER, SHE SHALL GO OUT FREE WITHOUT MONEY.
Awful Scroll Bible	Was she to be appointed for his son, he was to do as is the custom of daughters. Was he to receive out another: herself, clothing, and dwelling together - was it to diminish? Was he to do these three things? - She is to have gone out, free of silver.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version	. If he is appointing her for his son, he shall deal with her as is customary with daughters. If he is taking another for himself, he shall not diminish her meat, her covering and her cohabitation. " If these three things he is not doing for her then she will go forth gratuitously. There is no money paid.
Darby Translation	.
exeGesés companion Bible	And if he betroths her to his son, he deals with her after the judgment of daughters. If he takes another to himself; her flesh, her covering and her cohabitation, he diminishes not: and if he works not these three to her, then she goes out gratuitously without silve.

Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if he have betrothed her unto his ben, he shall deal with her according to the mishpat habanot (rights of [free] daughters; i.e., those rights of verse 10). If he take him another, her food, her covering of clothing, and her onah (conjugal rights) shall he not deprive. And if he does not perform these three unto her, then shall she go out free without kesef.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	And if to his soul he assign her, according to the custom for daughters, shall he do for her. If he take to himself another, her food her clothing, and her marriage-right, shall he not withdraw. But if these three, he will not do for her, then shall she go out for nought, without silver.
Third Millennium Bible	.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i> The Expanded Bible	. If the man who bought her promises to let the woman marry [ <sup>1</sup> designated her for] his son, he must treat her as [give her the rights of] a daughter. If the man who bought her marries another woman [he takes another wife], he must not keep his first wife from having [deprive her of] food or clothing or sexual relations [marital rights]. If he does not give her these three things, she may go free, and she owes him no money [ <sup>1</sup> with no debt; Lev. 25:39–43; Deut. 15:12–18].
The Geneva Bible Kretzmann's Commentary	. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, if he have purchased the girl with the intention of making her his son's wife or concubine, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters, according to the rights of a daughter. That was the second possibility. If he take him another wife, so that he have two or more wives or concubines, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, the special duty which marriage implies, shall he not diminish. She was on no account to be neglected also in case of this third possibility; the father was to use his power and authority in upholding the rights of the girl. And if he do not these three unto her, that is, if, in the three given instances, he does not do the right thing by her, then shall she go out free without money. The woman would have her freedom, and her father would have the advantage of the purchase-money. Thus was the Hebrew male or female servant protected, for the Israelites were not to forget that the lowly among their people were likewise members of God's chosen nation. The principle applies to Christian masters also, inasmuch as they will treat even the least among the believers as brethren and sisters in Christ.
Syndein/Thieme The Voice	. If the master chooses her as a wife for his son, then the master must treat her just as he would his own daughter. If the master decides he wants to marry an additional wife, then he must not reduce his slave-wife's food or clothing or any other marital rights. If he does not provide these three things for her, then she is free to leave without owing him any money for her freedom.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	And if he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the law of the daughters [of Israel].  <b>And if he designates her for his son:</b> [i.e., if] the master [chooses her as a wife for his son]. [This] teaches [us] that his son also stands in his [the master's] place to designate her if his father so desires, and he does not require another betrothal, but he [can] say to her, "Behold, you are designated to me with the money your father received [originally] for your value." -[From Kid. 18b]
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**according to the law of the daughters [of Israel]:** Meaning sustenance, clothing, and marital relations. — [From Mechilta]

If he takes another [wife] for himself, he shall not diminish her sustenance, her clothing, or her marital relations.

**If he takes another [wife] for himself:** in addition to her. — [From Mechilta]

**he shall not diminish her sustenance, her clothing, or her marital relations:** from the maidservant whom he had already designated. — [From Mechilta]

**her sustenance:** Heb. הֶרָאָה; [referring to] food. — [From Mechilta, Keth. 47b]

**her clothing:** Heb. הַתּוֹסֵט, lit., her covering As its apparent meaning [namely her clothing].

**her marital relations:** Heb. הִתְנַחֵץ, [meaning physical] intimacy. — [From Mechilta, Keth. 47b]

And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go free without charge, without [payment of] money.

**And if he does not do these three things for her:** If he does not do any one of these three things for her. Now what are these three things? He should designate her for himself or for his son [as a wife], or he should deduct from the money of her redemption and allow her to go free. But this one [master] designated her neither for himself nor for his son, and she could not afford to redeem herself [even after the deduction]. — [From Mechilta]

**she shall go free without charge:** [The text] adds [another means of] emancipation for this [maidservant] beyond what it provided for male slaves. Now what is this [means of] emancipation? כָּנָה הָאֵצִיץ informs you that she goes free when she shows [initial] signs [of puberty], and she must stay with him until she develops [these] signs. If six years pass before the appearance of these signs, we have already learned that she goes free, as it is said: "Should your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman [be sold to you, that one] shall serve you for six years" (Deut. 15: 12). What then is the meaning of "she shall go out without charge" ? If the signs [of puberty] precede the [end of] six years, she shall go free because of them. Or perhaps it means only that she goes out when she reaches maturity [i.e., at twelve and a half years]? Therefore, Scripture says: "without [payment of] money," to include her emancipation at maturity. If both of them [i.e., that she goes free "without charge" and "without money"] were not stated, [and "she shall go out without charge" was stated,] I would say that "she shall go out without charge" refers to [her being freed at] maturity. Therefore, both of them were stated, so that the disputant has no opportunity to differ. —[From Mechilta, Kid. 4a]

Kaplan Translation

If [the master] designates her as a bride for his son, she must be treated exactly the same as any other girl. [Similarly], if [the master] marries another wife, he may not diminish [this one's] allowance, clothing or conjugal rights. If none of the above three are done [to the girl], then she shall be released without liability or payment.

**the master**

Or, 'the son.'

**another wife**

Polygamy was permitted by Torah Law. It was only forbidden later by a ban pronounced by all European rabbis under the leadership of Rabbenu Gershom (circa 965-1028).

**above three**

Redemption, marriage, or marriage to a son (Rashi). The girl then must be released automatically when she reaches puberty.

## NET Bible®

If he designated her for his son, then he will deal with her according to the customary rights<sup>22</sup> of daughters. If he takes another wife,<sup>23</sup> he must not diminish the first one's food,<sup>24</sup> her clothing, or her marital rights.<sup>25</sup> If he does not provide her with these three things, then she will go out free, without paying money.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22tn</sup> Or "after the manner of" (KJV, ASV); NRSV "shall deal with her as with a daughter."

<sup>23tn</sup> "wife" has been supplied.

<sup>24tn</sup> The translation of "food" does not quite do justice to the Hebrew word. It is "flesh." The issue here is that the family she was to marry into is wealthy, they ate meat. She was not just to be given the basic food the ordinary people ate, but the fine foods that this family ate.

<sup>25sn</sup> See S. Paul, "Exodus 21:10, A Threefold Maintenance Clause," JNES 28 (1969): 48-53. Paul suggests that the third element listed is not marital rights but ointments since Sumerian and Akkadian texts list food, clothing, and oil as the necessities of life. The translation of "marital rights" is far from certain, since the word occurs only here. The point is that the woman was to be cared for with all that was required for a woman in that situation.

<sup>26sn</sup> The lessons of slavery and service are designed to bring justice to existing customs in antiquity. The message is: Those in slavery for one reason or another should have the hope of freedom and the choice of service (vv. 2-6). For the rulings on the daughter, the message could be: Women, who were often at the mercy of their husbands or masters, must not be trapped in an unfortunate situation, but be treated well by their masters or husbands (vv. 7-11). God is preventing people who have power over others from abusing it.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and if he will appoint her to his son, he will do to her just like the decision of the daughters, if he will take another, he will not take away her remains, her raiment and her habitation, and if he will not do these three to her, (then) she will go out freely without silver,...
Charles Thomson OT	...but if he betroth her for his son, he shall deal by her according to the privilege of daughters. And if the son take another for himself, he shall not deprive her of food and raiment and her marriage rites. And if he do not these three for her she shall go away ransom free.
C. Thompson (updated) OT Context Group Version	. And if he espouse her to his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he takes him another [wife]; her food, her clothing, and her conjugal rights, he shall not diminish. And if he does not do these three things to her, then she shall go out for nothing, without money.
English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	And if he espouses her to his son, he will deal with her according to the manner of daughters. If he takes him another wife, her food, her garments and her duty of marriage, he will not diminish. And if he does not do these three things to her, then she will go out for nothing, without money.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food [Lit <i>flesh</i> ], her clothing, or her conjugal rights. If he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without <i>payment</i> of money.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	If he has designated her for his son, then he shall deal with her according to the customary rights of daughters. If he marries another wife, then he must not diminish <i>the first one's</i> food, her clothing, or her marital rights. If he does not provide these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.



Updated Bible Version 2.17 .  
 A Voice in the Wilderness .  
 Webster's Bible Translation .  
 World English Bible .  
 Young's Literal Translation .  
 Young's Updated LT

"And if to his son he betroth her, according to the right of daughters he does to her.  
 "If another woman he take for him, her food, her covering, and her habitation, he does not withdraw; and if these three he do not to her, then she has gone out for nought, without money.

**The gist of this passage:** If this woman who was purchased was meant to marry the son, then she must be treated as daughters are treated. If another woman enters into the marriage, then the first wife must not be neglected in any way; otherwise, she may exit the entire situation, without cost.

9-11

Exodus 21:9			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
yâʾad (יָדַעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to appoint, to assign, to designate; to point out; to define; to espouse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3259 BDB #416
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mîsh <sup>e</sup> pâṭ (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced <i>mish<sup>e</sup>-PAWT</i> ]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

## Exodus 21:9

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Gesenius organizes the meanings as follows:</p> <p>(1) <i>a judgement</i>; including:</p> <p>(a) <i>the act of judging</i>; (b) <i>the place of judgment</i>; (c) <i>a forensic cause, the setting forth of a cause, to appeal a judgment</i>; (d) <i>the sentence of a judge</i>; (e) <i>the fault or crime one is judged for</i>;</p> <p>(2) <i>a right, that which is just, lawful according to law</i>; which set of meanings would include:</p> <p>(a) <i>a law, a statute; a body of laws</i>; (b) <i>that which is lawfully due a person, a privilege, a legal privilege, the right of redemption, the right of primogeniture</i>; (c) <i>a manner, a custom</i>; (d) <i>a fashion, a kind, a plan</i>.</p> <p>We could possibly add the meanings for the plural: <i>laws, responsibilities, privileges</i>. From the standpoint of the one under judgment, <i>mîshepâṭ</i> could mean <i>appeal</i>.</p>			
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> °]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** *If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters.*

Exodus 21:9 *And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters.* (NKJV)

So you see, the young woman may have been purchased with the idea of marrying her off to one of this man's sons. Depending upon how she fits into the household functioning as a maid and depending upon her interaction with any one of his sons, a decision can be made to change her position from maid to daughter-in-law.

My translation at this point is:

Exodus 21:9 *If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

That is a very literal translation, but it means roughly the same thing.

One of the unfortunate aspects of depending upon the scholarship of another is that they may not always be accurate. Owen's translation reads: *If he designates her for his son as with a daughter he shall deal with her.* Our problem is that the word *mîsh<sup>e</sup>pâṭ* (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced *mish<sup>e</sup>-PAWT*] is found in the Hebrew in some manuscripts, but nowhere in Owen's translation. Recall that this is generally translated *laws, ordinances, judgements*. This is preceded by the *bêyth* preposition which means *in, into, by*.

Here is a man who has purchased a woman from a family in desperate straights and the understanding is that he has purchased her possibly to be married to his son. Under these circumstances, she is not a slave to him to be bought or sold but he is to treat her as a daughter.

I experienced some difficulty in translating this verse. Here is what some others did:

Easy to Read Version	If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, then she must not be treated like a slave. She must be treated like a daughter.
Lexham English Bible	And if he selects her for his son, he shall do for her according to the regulations for daughters.
English Standard Version	If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. [Kukis: the ESV appears to use a manuscript which lacks the word <i>mîsh<sup>e</sup>pâṭ</i> (מִשְׁפָּט).]
Webster's translation	And if he espouses her to his son, he will deal with her according to the manner of daughters.

What appears to be the case is, if a master gives a slave woman that he purchased to his son in marriage, then she is no longer to be treated as a slave; but treated just as all women are treated (or should be treated) in marriage.

The way that this is set up covers all bases, whether this woman was purchased as a slave; or had her dowry paid for by her service.

Exodus 21:9 If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:10			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'îm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
'achêr (אַחֵר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHEHR</i> ]	<i>another, following, next; other as well as foreign, alien, strange</i>	feminine singular adjective/substantive	Strong's #312 BDB #29
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
sh <sup>e</sup> êr (שָׁר) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>air</i> ]	<i>flesh, body; meat; food, as food; for physical power (figuratively); kin, near kin, near kinswoman; flesh relation, blood relation; self</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7607 BDB #984
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
k <sup>e</sup> çûwth (כֶּסֶד) [pronounced <i>kehs- OOTH</i> ]	<i>covering, a cover; concealment; clothing, a garment</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3682 BDB #492
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Exodus 21:10

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿōwnâh (עֹנָה) [pronounced <i>goh-NAW</i> ]	<i>cohabitation, conjugal rights marriage agreement, marriage duties</i>	feminine singular noun, with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5772 BDB #773
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
gâra' (גָּרַע) [pronounced <i>gaw-RAHG</i> ]	<i>to diminish, to restrain, to withdraw, to reduce, to lessen</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1639 BDB #175

It actually means *to shave off* [a beard], and therefore *to cut off, to take away, to detract, to withhold*. When followed by the preposition 'el (עַל), it means *to take in, to lay up, to put in store for oneself*. In Job 15:8, the NASB renders this verb *to limit*.

**Translation:** If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*].

Exodus 21:10 If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. (NKJV)

One word is a problem in v.10 and that is the one often translated *food* (NASB, KJV, *The Amplified Bible*, NRSV and Owen's). This word is sh<sup>e</sup>êr (שֶׁׁר) [pronounced *sh<sup>e</sup>air*] which is translated in the Pentateuch as *blood relative, near kinsman*. The word means *flesh*, but it is used more figuratively for a close relationship, as we see in Leviticus 18:6, 12, 13, 20:19 21:2 25:19 Numbers 27:11 (this is a complete listing in the Pentateuch). Therefore, in this context, this could be rendered *marriage rights, status, position*. This would certainly include getting enough food to eat.

My translation of Exodus 21:10: If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There would be times when a man might take more than one wife. Interestingly enough, there is nothing said about this in the Old Testament. That is, there are no prohibitions in this regard that I remember having come across. Interestingly enough, there are only a few examples of men having more than one wife (and in many cases, the second wife comes on the scene when the first wife is long gone or dead, as in the cases of Abraham and Moses).

Let me suggest why this is the case. When a man marries, he may find that his wife is a handful, from time to time. If he was to introduce another woman into the family—a second wife—what are the changes that having two women under the same roof are potentially far more than a handful.

At one time, I had two women as roommates. When things were good, they were good; but if things went south, they went way, way south.

Back to the passage at hand.

Exodus 21:10: If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

What God requires is, the first wife—in this case, a former slave—cannot be treated differently or demoted back to being a slave or anything like that. In marriage, the man has the responsibility for the woman, to see that she is taken care of. She is still to be fed and clothed and she retains all of her rights as a wife, no matter what happens along the road of life.

You will note that, no matter what the buyer/dowry payer claims, this woman may not be mistreated in any way.

Exodus 21:10 If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*]. (NKJV)

What we are dealing with is a man who has purchased a woman with the stated purpose that she would be wed to him or to his son. In v. 8, he potentially loses the control of the woman because he purchased her under false pretenses; in v. 9, if she becomes his daughter-in-law, she is to be treated as a daughter and not in any way shape or form as a slave. And if the husband later takes a new wife, she is not to receive a lesser portion or position than that to which she has become accustomed.

In this last law, it is God's first choice for us to be married to one woman. However, in this point in time, men did marry several women and had several concubines so that God set up laws concerning those circumstances.

### Links to Doctrines on Marriage

The **Doctrine of the Christian Marriage** ([grace notes](#))  
 The **Doctrine of Marriage** ([Robert Deffinbaugh, ThM](#))  
**Love in Marriage** ([Grace Doctrine.org](#))  
**Marriage and More** ([West Bank Bible Church](#))  
**Marriage Roles** ([Grace Bible Church](#))  
**Marriage; Considering Marriage** ([Grace Bible Church](#))  
**Marriage** ([Lake Erie Bible Church](#))  
**Divorce and Remarriage** ([Lake Erie Bible Church](#))  
 The **Doctrine of Polygamy** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#))

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 21:10 If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., *may not be withdrawn*]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Exodus 21:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
shâlôsh (שָׁלוֹשׁ) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHSH</i> ]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	numeral; masculine singular noun	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025

## Exodus 21:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things; they</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong's #428 BDB #41
lōʾ (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ʿaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced lʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** *If he does not do these three things for her,...*

The husband—in the example given, the son of her master—must continue to provide for her all of these things: food, clothing and normal marital privileges. There would be a consequence if he did not.

## Exodus 21:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâʾ (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
chinnâm (כִּנְּאָם) [pronounced khin-NAHM]	<i>gratuitous, freely, for nothing; for no purpose, in vain, without cause, undeservedly</i>	substantive/adverb	Strong's #2600 BDB #336
ʾēyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
keṣeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]	<i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #3701 BDB #494

**Translation:** *...then she will go out freely without cost [freely no silver (required)].*



If the woman, the former maidservant, is not taken care of, then she can exit the marriage and leave that family entirely. She owes nothing to them; and she has her complete freedom.

This is the case, whether the man who paid for her claims that she is a slave or a wife (for himself or for his son). It does not matter how much he paid for her, under the circumstances described, she leaves this arrangement without cost and without ties.

Exodus 21:11 *If he does not do these three things for her, then she will go out freely without cost* [freely no silver (required)]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:9–11 *If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters. If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., may not be withdrawn]. If he does not do these three things for her, then she will go out freely without cost* [freely no silver (required)]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

In these laws, God has given three different scenarios and how one who purchases an Hebrew woman from her family should deal with her. Generally speaking, if he does not deal honorably with her as so stated, then she may leave him without being purchased.

The key to understanding and appreciating all that is taking place here, we must see the entire context, which is vv. 7–11:

Exodus 21:7–8 *If a man sells his daughter as a maid, she will not be subject to the same work done by the male slaves. If she disappoints her master, he still may not reassign her, selling her to a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her in this way.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Exodus 21:9–11 *Let's say her owner assigns her in marriage to one of his sons, and all the preparations are done for her. If the son takes on another wife in marriage, her support must be maintained (her food, shelter, clothing and marriage rights). If the owner does not do these things for her, then she may leave that family, freely and without cost.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Too often, Biblical critics will take a small portion of this, using a poor translation, and have reason to complain about the treatment of this woman. However, when taken in its full context, God is looking after the woman, by His law, for her entire life, even if she has come out of abject poverty.

There is somewhat of a hidden gem in this passage. Remember, there is the master (the man who paid for her) and the woman (who perhaps was purchased to marry one of his sons and perhaps as a slave). The master, the man, cannot say, "This woman is a disappointment; I did not get a good woman in this process. I really have no choice but to sell her to someone else (a non-Jewish family)." He cannot say or do any of that, even as the master.

However, the woman—the slave woman, if you will—if she is married to one of the sons and he takes another wife in addition to her, she can say, "I am not being taken care of as a wife should be taken care of. I should be released." And then she walks away, freely and without cost. The testimony of the slave-owner, whether true or not, is not accepted; but the testimony of the woman is accepted at face value.

All of the laws conditions and limitations are placed on the master, the one who paid for her. These laws do not place conditions and limitations on her. God sees that a woman out of poverty is taken care of, even if her own family was financially unable to do so.

Does that sound anti-woman to you?

Exodus 21:9–11 *Let's say her owner assigns her in marriage to one of his sons, and all the preparations are done for her. If the son takes on another wife in marriage, her support must be maintained (her food, shelter, clothing*

and marriage rights). If the owner does not do these things for her, then she may leave that family, freely and without cost. (Kukis paraphrase)

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Regulations Concerning Acts of Violence

Exodus 21:12–17 give us a list of offenses for which the death penalty is prescribed. These are not the only capital offenses, but they are a list of important ones.

<p>The one striking a man and he has died, dying he will be executed. And when he does not lie in wait, and the Elohim has caused to meet for his hand, and I will appoint to you a place that he will flee to there. And when acts presumptuously a man against his neighbor, to kill him in guile, from with My altar you will take him to die.</p>	Exodus 21:12–14	<p>[If] one strikes a man and he has died, he will surely be executed. And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him], and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand, I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. When a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, to kill him with guile, you will take him from My altar and [he will] die.</p>
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If one man strikes another, so that he dies, the killer will certainly be executed. However, if he does not lie in wait intending to harm him, then I will appoint a place where he may flee to. But, when a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, killing him with guile, you will take him from the altar and execute him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	<p>The one striking a man and he has died, dying he will be executed. And when he does not lie in wait, and the Elohim has caused to meet for his hand, and I will appoint to you a place that he will flee to there. And when acts presumptuously a man against his neighbor, to kill him in guile, from with My altar you will take him to die.</p>
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	<p>Whosoever striketh a man and killeth him, being killed he shall be killed. But if it was not (done) covertly to him, but he was delivered into his hand from before the Lord, then I will appoint thee a place whither he may flee. But when a wicked man acts toward his neighbour with deceitfulness to kill him, even from Mine altar thou shalt bring him away to put him to death.</p>
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	<p>Whosoever smiteth a son or a daughter of Israel, so as to cause death, shall be put to death with the sword. But he who did not attack him, but mischance from before the Lord befell him at his hand, I will appoint thee a place where he may flee. But if a man come maliciously upon his neighbour to kill him with craft, though the priests are ministering at My altar, thence thou shalt take him, and slay him with the sword. [JERUSALEM. But if a man deviseth against his neighbour to kill him by guile, though the high priest were standing to minister before Me, from thence thou shalt bring him, and put him to death.] .</p>
Revised Douay-Rheims	<p>He that strikes a man with a will to kill him, shall be put to death. But he that did not lie in wait for him, but God delivered him into his hands: I will appoint you a place to which he must flee. If a man kill his neighbour on set purpose and by lying in wait for him: you shall take him away from my altar, that he may die.</p>

Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.) Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. "One who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death, but not if it is unintentional, but God allows it to happen: then I will appoint you a place where he shall flee. If a man schemes and comes presumptuously on his neighbour to kill him, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T. Plain English Aramaic Bible Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	. He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. But if a man ventures to attack his neighbor and slay him treacherously, you shall take him even from my altar to put him to death.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if any man smite another and he die, let him be certainly put to death. But as for him that did it not willingly, but God delivered him into his hands, I will give thee a place whither the slayer may flee. And if any one lie in wait for his neighbour to slay him by craft, and he go for refuge, thou shalt take him from my altar to put him to death.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	He who gives a man a death-blow is himself to be put to death. But if he had no evil purpose against him, and God gave him into his hand, I will give you a place to which he may go in flight. But if a man makes an attack on his neighbour on purpose, to put him to death by deceit, you are to take him from my altar and put him to death.
Easy English	<b>When people attack other people</b> Perhaps a person will hit another person and kill him. This is murder. The person who does it must die. But perhaps he did not want to do it, but God let it happen. Then the man must run away to a place that I will show him. But a man may decide to kill another man. Then you must take him away from my table and you must kill him.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001 Easy-to-Read Version–2006	. "Whoever hits and kills someone must be killed too. But if an accident happens, and a person kills someone without planning it, then God allowed that thing to happen. I will choose some special places where people can run to for safety. So that person can run to one of those places. But whoever plans to kill someone out of anger or hatred must be punished. Take them away from my altar [It was one of the special places an innocent person could run to for safety.] and kill them.
God's Word™	<b>Laws Concerning Injury to People</b> "Whoever strikes someone and kills him must be put to death. If it wasn't done intentionally, but Elohim let it happen, the killer should flee to a place I will set aside for you. But whenever someone becomes so angry that he plans to kill his neighbor, you must take him away from my altar and put him to death.
Good News Bible (TEV)	<b>Laws about Violent Acts</b> "Whoever hits someone and kills him is to be put to death. But if it was an accident and he did not mean to kill him, he can escape to a place which I will choose for you, and there he will be safe. But when someone gets angry and deliberately kills someone else, he is to be put to death, even if he has run to my altar for safety.
The Message	"If someone hits another and death results, the penalty is death. But if there was no intent to kill—if it was an accident, an 'act of God'—I'll set aside a place to which the killer can flee for refuge. But if the murder was premeditated, cunningly plotted, then drag the killer away, even if it's from my Altar, to be put to death.
Names of God Bible	.

## NIRV

**Laws About Harming Others**

“Anyone who hits and kills someone else must be put to death. Suppose they did not do it on purpose. Suppose I let it happen. Then they can escape to a place I will choose. But suppose they kill someone on purpose. Then take them away from my altar and put them to death.

## New Simplified Bible

»Death is the punishment for murder. »If you did not intend to kill someone and I, Jehovah, let it happen anyway, you may run for safety to a place that I have set aside. »If a man schemes and kills a man deliberately remove him from my altar and put him to death.

**Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:**

## Casual English Bible

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## College Press Bible Study

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## Contemporary English V.

Death is the punishment for murder. But if you did not intend to kill someone, and I, the LORD, let it happen anyway, you may run for safety to a place that I have set aside. If you plan in advance to murder someone, there's no escape, not even by holding on to my altar. You will be dragged off and killed.

## The Living Bible

“Anyone who hits a man so hard that he dies shall surely be put to death. But if it is accidental—an act of God—and not intentional, then I will appoint a place where he can run and get protection. However, if a man deliberately attacks another, intending to kill him, drag him even from my altar, and kill him.

## New Berkeley Version

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## New Life Version

**Laws about Fighting and Killing**

“Whoever hits a man so that he dies will be put to death. But if he did not plan to hurt him, but God allowed it to happen, then I will give you a place where he may run to be safe. But if a man wants to hurt his neighbor and he plans to kill him, then you take him away from My altar and put him to death.

## New Living Translation

**Cases of Personal Injury**

“Anyone who assaults and kills another person must be put to death. But if it was simply an accident permitted by God, I will appoint a place of refuge where the slayer can run for safety. However, if someone deliberately kills another person, then the slayer must be dragged even from my altar and be put to death.

## Unlocked Dynamic Bible

If someone hits a man in order to kill him and the man dies, then that person should also be put to death. But if the one who hit the other did not mean to kill that person, the one who hit him can go to a place that I will choose for you, and he will be safe there. But if someone gets angry with another person and kills him on purpose, even if the murderer runs to the altar, you must kill him.

## Unfolding Bible Simplified

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**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

## American English Bible

‘If any man strikes another man and kills him, he must absolutely be put to death. But if such a thing should happen by accident, or if God [allows the situation that causes the death]; I will provide a place to which the killer can run. However, if someone who lies in wait and plans to murder his neighbor runs to that refuge, you must take him [far] from My Altar and put him to death.

## Beck’s American Translation

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## Common English Bible

**Instructions about human violence**

Anyone who hits and kills someone should be put to death. If the killing wasn’t on purpose but an accident allowed by God, then I will designate a place to which the killer can run away. But if someone plots and kills another person on purpose, you should remove the killer from my altar and put him to death.

New Advent (Knox) Bible	Whoever kills a man with intent to kill, must pay for it with his life. But where there was no malice aforethought, and God provides the occasion,[6] he shall be allowed to find refuge in such place as I shall appoint for thee. One who lies in wait on purpose to kill his neighbour shall be torn away even from my altar to die. [6] 'Provides the occasion'; literally, 'delivers him into his hand'. This could mean a chance encounter, followed by a murder in hot blood, which would be classed as manslaughter; cf. 1 Kg. 26.23. But accidental killing may be meant (cf. Num. 35.22, 23; Deut. 19.4), the accident being represented as a Providential interference.
Translation for Translators	You must execute anyone who strikes another person with the result that the person who is struck dies. But if the one who struck the other did not intend to kill that person, the one who struck him can escape to a place that I will choose for you, <i>and he will be safe there</i> . But if someone gets angry with another person and kills him, even if the murderer runs to the altar, <i>a place that God designated as a place to be safe</i> , you must execute him.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	Anyone who strikes another man with a fatal blow will certainly be executed. [The crime of manslaughter, by this code, is punished as severely as is murder in either degree. <sup>25</sup> ] If a man did not hunt down the other man, but God fated that man to die at his hand, I will appoint for you a place to which he shall flee. But if a man murders his neighbor with premeditation and treachery, you will drag him away from My altar, as the case may be, and have him executed.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<b>Law of Murder.</b> 'Whoever assails a man and he dies ;—-He shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait, but his stroke came from Gob, then you shall provide a place where he may fly. If, however, a man plans against his neighbour to murder him; then you shall take him from My altar to kill him.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	He that smites a man that he die, shall be slain for it. If a man lay not await but God deliver him into his hand, then I will point you a place *whither he shall flee. If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor and slay him with guile, you shall take him from mine altar that he die. *whither=what ever place, result, or condition.
HCSB	<b>Laws about Personal Injury</b> "Whoever strikes a person so that he dies must be put to death. But if he didn't intend any harm, [Lit <i>he was not lying in wait</i> ] and yet God caused it to happen by his hand, I will appoint a place for you where he may flee. If a person schemes and willfully [Or <i>maliciously</i> ] acts against his neighbor to murder him, you must take him from My altar to be put to death.
International Standard V	<b>Laws Concerning Personal Injury and Homicide</b> "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies is certainly to be put to death. If he didn't lie in wait, but God let him fall into his reach,j then I'll appoint for you a place to which he may flee. If a man acts deliberately against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you are to take him to die even if he's atk my altar.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	<b>Regulations Regarding Murder, Manslaughter, and Various Injuries</b> " '{Whoever strikes someone} and he dies will surely be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait {and it was an accident}, I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. But if a man schemes against his neighbor to kill him by treachery, you will take him from my altar to die.

<sup>25</sup> Wrong.



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**Personal Injuries**

“Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. However, if it is not done intentionally, but God lets it happen, they are to flee to a place I will designate. But if anyone schemes and kills someone deliberately, that person is to be taken from my altar and put to death.

Peter Pett’s translation  
Unfolding Bible Literal Text  
Unlocked Literal Bible

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.  
Whoever strikes a man so that he dies, that person must surely be put to death. If the man did not do it with premeditation, but instead by accident, then I will fix a place to where he can flee. If a man willfully attacks his neighbor and kills him according to a cunning plan, then you must take him, even if he is at God’s altar, so that he may die.

Urim-Thummim Version

He that strikes a man so that he dies will certainly be put to death. However if he did not do it on purpose but Elohim allowed him to befall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place where he will flee. But if a man boils up in a rage to another person, to murder him by design, you will take him from my altar so that he may be executed.

Wikipedia Bible Project

He who strikes a man who dies, will be killed dead. And he who did not premeditate, and God moved his hand, and I will put for you a place for him to flee there. And who sneaks on his fellow man to kill him in stealth, from my altar take him to die.

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988) The man who strikes another and so causes his death shall die. If he did not want to kill him, but as it were, let it happen, then I will give you a place where he may find refuge. Instead, if a man willfully attacks another to kill him treacherously, you will take him away even from my altar and put him to death.

The Heritage Bible

He who strikes a man, and he dies, he, being put to death, shall be put to death. And if he does not chase him, and God brings him into his hand, then I will put for you a place where he shall flee. And if a man boils over upon his neighbor, to fatally strike him by deliberate strategy, you shall take him from my altar that he may die.

New American Bible (2002)

"Whoever strikes a man a mortal blow must be put to death. He, however, who did not hunt a man down, but caused his death by an act of God, may flee to a place which I will set apart for this purpose. But when a man kills another after maliciously scheming to do so, you must take him even from my altar and put him to death.

New American Bible (2011)

*Personal Injury.*

\* Whoever strikes someone a mortal blow must be put to death. [Lv 24:17; Nm 35:15–29; Dt 4:41–42; 19:2–5] However, regarding the one who did not hunt another down, but God caused death to happen by his hand, I will set apart for you a place to which that one may flee. But when someone kills a neighbor after maliciously scheming to do so, you must take him even from my altar and put him to death.

\* [21:12–14] Unintentional homicide is to be punished differently from premeditated, deliberate murder. One who kills unintentionally can seek asylum by grasping the horns of the altar at the local sanctuary. In later Israelite history, when worship was centralized in Jerusalem, cities throughout the realm were designated as places of refuge. Apparently the leaders of the local community were to determine whether or not the homicide was intentional.

New English Bible–1970

**Laws about violence.**

Whoever strikes another man and kills him shall be put to death. But if he did not act with intent, but they met by act of God, the slayer may flee to a place which I will appoint for you. But if a man has the presumption to kill another by treachery, you shall take him even from my altar to be put to death.



New Jerusalem Bible 'Anyone who by violence causes a death must be put to death. If, however, he has not planned to do it but it comes from God by his hand, he can take refuge in a place which I shall appoint for you. But should any person dare to kill another with deliberate planning, you will take that person even from my altar to be put to death.

New RSV .

Revised English Bible—1989 .

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible "Whoever attacks a person and causes his death must be put to death. If it was not premeditated but an act of God, then I will designate for you a place to which he can flee. But if someone willfully kills another after deliberate planning, you are to take him even from my altar and put him to death.

exeGeses companion Bible .

Hebraic Roots Bible He that strikes a man so that he dies, dying he shall die. But he who does not lie in wait, and Elohim lets fall into his hand, I will appoint a place for you where he may flee. And when a man seethes insolently against his neighbor, to kill him by deceit, you shall take him from My altar to die.

Israeli Authorized Version .

The Israel Bible (beta) .

JPS (Tanakh—1985) .

Kaplan Translation .

*The Scriptures* 1998 .

Tree of Life Version

"Whoever strikes a man so that he dies must surely be put to death. But if he did not hunt him down, yet God caused it to happen, then I will appoint for you a place where he may run. If a man presumes to kill his neighbor with craftiness, you are to take him from My altar and put him to death.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible AND IF ANY MAN SMITE ANOTHER AND HE DIE, LET HIM BE CERTAINLY PUT TO DEATH. BUT AS FOR HIM THAT DID IT NOT WILLINGLY, BUT THEOS (*Alpha & Omega*) DELIVERED HIM INTO HIS HANDS, I WILL GIVE YOU A PLACE WHERE THE SLAYER MAY FLEE. AND IF ANY ONE LIE IN WAIT FOR HIS NEIGHBOR TO SLAY HIM BY CRAFT, AND HE GO FOR REFUGE, YOU SHALL TAKE HIM FROM MY ALTAR TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.

Awful Scroll Bible He striking a man, even is he to have died, as to dying was he was to die. Is it to have been in ambushed him? - He of mighty ones is to have occasioned him by his hand, then I am to have set a place where he was to flee. Was he to act presumptuously to his fellow, to slay him in subtlety? - He was to be taken from the altar and is to die.

Charles Thomson OT .

Concordant Literal Version

The smiter of a man that dies shall be put to death, yea death. But if he had no malicious intent, yet the One, Elohim, He had fated him into his hand, then I set for you a place where he shall flee. Yet in case a man was planning arrogantly against his associate so as to kill him by craft, from My altar shall you take him to die.

Darby Translation

He that striketh a man, so that he die, shall certainly be put to death. But if he have not lain in wait, and God have delivered him into his hand, I will appoint thee a place to which he shall flee. But if a man act wantonly toward his neighbour, and slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

exeGeses companion Bible

#### **JUDGMENTS FOR INJURIES**

He who smites a man, thus he dies:  
in deathifying, deathify him.  
And if a man lurks not,

	<p>but Elohim happens him into his hand;          then I set you a place for him to flee.          And if a man seethes against his friend,          to slaughter him with strategy,          take him from my sacrifice altar to die.</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>He that strikes down an ish, so that the ish die, shall be surely put to death.          And if he lie not in ambush, but HaElohim deliver him into his yad, then I will appoint thee a makom (i.e., city of refuge) where he shall flee there.          But if an ish come premeditatedly upon his re'a, to murder him by guile; thou shalt take him from Mine Mizbe'ach for capital punishment.</p>
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	<p>He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death. But he who hath not lain in wait, but, God, hath occasioned him to come to his hand, then will I appoint for thee a place, whither he may flee. But, when a man shall act presumptuously against his neighbour to slay him with guile, from mine altar, shalt thou take him to die.</p>
Third Millennium Bible	.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<p><b>Personal Injuries</b></p> <p>"Whoever strikes a man so that he dies must be put to death. However, if he did not lie in wait [for him] [i.e. if the act causing the death of another was unintentional.], but God allowed him to fall into his hand, then I will establish for you a place to which he may escape [for protection until duly tried] [i.e. after the children of Israel possessed the promised land, six cities of refuge were established.]. But if a man acts intentionally against another and kills him by [design through] treachery, you are to take him from My altar [to which he may have fled for protection], so that he may be put to death.</p>
The Expanded Bible	<p><b>Laws About Injuries</b></p> <p>"Anyone who ·hits [strikes] a person and kills him must be put to death. But if a person kills someone ·accidentally [without premeditation], God allowed that to happen, so ·the person must go to a place I will choose [<sup>L</sup> I will appoint for you a place to which the person may flee; Josh. 20:1–9]. But if someone plans and murders another person on purpose, put him to death, even if he has run to my altar for safety.</p>
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	<p><b>Verses 12-27</b></p> <p>Concerning Murder and Bodily Injuries</p> <p>He that smiteth a man, strikes him down with deliberate intention, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. The reference seems to be to a murder committed in the heat of anger or in a condition of intoxication. And if a man lie not in wait, does not seek a man's life with deliberate intent, but God deliver him into his hand, God permits it to happen in that manner that a man kills another by accident, then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. The Lord later designated certain cities as cities of refuge, Num. 35:11; Deut. 19:1-10. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile, if he has deliberately planned the crime and carried it out in cold blood, thou shalt take him from Mine altar that he may die; in that case it would not even avail the murderer to seek the refuge of the sanctuary. Because he has broken down the sacred wall which protected his neighbor, therefore it would also, in his case, not be a violation of the altar of God to tear him away from its protection and put him to death.</p>
Syndein/Thieme	<p>He who smites a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but 'Elohiym/Godhead deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint you a place whither he shall flee.</p>

{Verses 14-17: Capital Punishment for 1st Degree Murder}

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile/craftiness; you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

The Voice

If a man attacks another and the victim dies from the attack, then the attacker must be put to death. But if God allows a person to die at the hands of another who never intended to kill him in the first place, then I will appoint a place where he can run *and take refuge from those who would exact revenge*. But if a man plans an attack and cunningly kills his victim, then *he will find no refuge* at my altar. Take him from there and put him to death.

## Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

One who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

**One who strikes a man so that he dies:** Several verses have been written in the section dealing with murderers, and I will explain what I am able to explain [about] why they [these verses] are needed.

**One who strikes a man so that he dies:** Why was this said? Because it says: “And if a man strikes down any human being, he shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 24:17), I understand [that even if he deals him] a blow without death. Therefore, the Torah says: “He who strikes a man and he dies,” meaning that he is liable only for a blow causing death. If it said: “He who strikes a man,” and it did not say, “And if a man strikes down any human being,” I would say that one is liable only if one strikes a man. If one strikes a woman or a minor, how do we know [that one is liable]? Therefore, the Torah says: “if [a man] strikes down any human being,” referring even to a minor or even a woman. Also, if it said: “He who strikes a man,” I would understand that even a minor who struck and killed [someone] would be liable. Therefore, the Torah [specifically] says: “if a man strikes down,” but not a minor who strikes [someone] down. Also, “if... strikes down any human being” implies even a nonviable infant. Therefore, the Torah [here] says: “He who strikes a man,” implying one is liable only if one strikes a viable infant, one [who is] capable of becoming a man [i.e., an adult]. -[From Mechilta]

But one who did not stalk [him], but God brought [it] about into his hand, I will make a place for you to which he shall flee.

**But one who did not stalk [him]:** He did not lie in wait for him, and he did not intend [to kill him]. -[From Sifrei, Num. 35:22]

**stalk:** Heb. הִדַּח, an expression meaning “lie in wait.” And so does Scripture say: “but you are stalking (הִדַּח) my soul to take it” (I Sam. 24:12). It is, however, impossible to say that הִדַּח is an expression [that is] related to [hunting animals as in the following verse:] “the one who hunted game (דָּבַח) (Gen. 27:33) [and to render: he did not hunt him down], because in [the expression of] hunting beasts, there is no “hey” in its verb, and the noun related to it is דָּבַח, whereas the noun in this case is הִדָּח (Num. 35:20), and its verb is הִדָּח, but the verb of this one [namely hunting] is דָּבַח. I say, [therefore,] that this is to be interpreted as the Targum [Onkelos] renders: But he who did not stalk [him]. Menachem, however, classified it (Machbereth Menachem, p. 148) in the grouping along with דָּבַח, but I disagree with him. If it is at all possible to classify it in one of the groupings of דָּבַח [enumerated by Menachem], we may classify it in the grouping of “on the side (דָּבַח) you shall be borne” (Isa. 66:12); “I shall shoot to the side (דָּבַח)” (I Sam. 20:20); “And he will speak words against [lit., to the side of] (דָּבַח) the Most High” (Dan. 7:25). Here, too, הִדָּח אֶל כּוֹשֵׁף means that he did not look sideways (דָּבַח) to find for him some occasion [lit., side] to kill him. This [interpretation] too is questionable. In any case, it is an expression of stalking. [

**but God brought [it] about into his hand:** Heb. הֵכֵן, made it ready for his hand, an expression similar to “No harm will be prepared (תִּהְיוּקָה) for you” (Ps. 91:10); No wrong shall be prepared (יִהְיוּאָי) (Prov. 12:21); [and] “he is preparing himself (מְהַכֵּן) against me” (II Kings 5:7), [meaning that] he is preparing himself to find a pretext against me..

**but God brought [it] about into his hand:** Now why should this go out from before Him? That is what David said, “*As the proverb of the Ancient One says, 'From the wicked comes forth wickedness'*” (I Sam. 24:14). The proverb of the Ancient One is the Torah, which is the proverb of the Holy One, blessed is He, Who is the Ancient One of the world. Now where did the Torah say, “*From the wicked comes forth wickedness*”? [This refers to:] “*but God brought [it] about into his hand.*” To what is the text referring? To two people, one who killed unintentionally and one who killed intentionally, but there were no witnesses who would testify to the matter. This one [who killed intentionally] was not executed, and that one [who killed unintentionally] was not exiled [to the refuge cities]. So the Holy One, blessed is He, brings them [both] to one inn. The one who killed intentionally sits under a ladder, and the one who killed unintentionally is ascending the ladder, and he falls on the one who had killed intentionally and kills him, and witnesses testify about him and sentence him to exile. The result is that the one who killed unintentionally is exiled, and the one who killed intentionally was killed. -[From Mechilta, Makkoth 10b]

**I will make a place for you:** Even in the desert, where he [the man who has murdered] shall flee, and what place affords him asylum? This is the camp of the Levites. -[From Mechilta, Mak. 12b]

But if a man plots deliberately against his friend to slay him with cunning, [even] from My altar you shall take him to die.

**But if... plots deliberately:** Why was this said? Because it said: “One who strikes [a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death]” (verse 12), I [may] understand [this to apply to] a physician [who killed a patient], the agent of the court who killed by [administering] forty lashes, the father who strikes his son, the teacher who disciplines his pupil, and the unintentional [killer]. Therefore, the Torah states: “But if [a man] plots deliberately,” but not the unintentional [killer]; “to slay him with cunning,” but not the agent of the court, the physician, or the one who disciplines his son or his pupil, for although they are intentional [in striking], they do not act with cunning. -[From Mechilta]

**[even] from My altar:** if he were a kohen and wanted to perform the [sacrificial] service, you shall take him to die. [From Mechilta, Yoma 85a]

Kaplan Translation

### *Manslaughter*

If one person strikes another and [the victim] dies, [the murderer] must be put to death. If he did not plan to kill [his victim], but God caused it to happen, then I will provide a place where [the killer] can find refuge.

### *Murder*

If a person plots against his neighbor to kill him intentionally, then you must even take him from My altar to put him to death.

### **the murderer...**

See Genesis 9:6, Leviticus 24:17, Numbers 35:30.

### **I will provide a place...**

See Numbers 35:10-34, Deuteronomy 19:1-13, Joshua 20:1-9.

### **intentionally**

(Hirsch). Or, 'by foul play,' 'with premeditation,' or 'with guile.'

### **from My altar**

And such a murderer can certainly be removed from any refuge city (Ibn Ezra; Chizzkuni). Even if the murderer is a priest offering sacrifice, he can be taken from the altar (Mekhilta; Rashi).

Some say that in the desert, before the refuge cities were selected, the altar served as a refuge for the accidental murderer (Sforno). According to others, the altar served as a sanctuary for unpremeditated murder, but not for the premeditated crime (Abarbanel; Akedath Yitzchak; MeAm Lo'ez). See 1 Kings 2:28, 32.

NET Bible®

#### *Personal Injuries*

<sup>27</sup> “Whoever strikes someone<sup>28</sup> so that he dies<sup>29</sup> must surely be put to death.<sup>30</sup> But if he does not do it with premeditation,<sup>31</sup> but it happens by accident,<sup>32</sup> then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. But if a man willfully attacks his neighbor to kill him cunningly,<sup>33</sup> you will take him even from my altar that he may die.

<sup>27sn</sup> The underlying point of this section remains vital today: The people of God must treat all human life as sacred.

<sup>28tn</sup> The construction uses a Hiphil participle in construct with the noun for “man” (or person as is understood in a law for the nation): “the one striking [of] a man.” This is a casus pendens (independent nominative absolute); it indicates the condition or action that involves further consequence (GKC 361 §116.w).

<sup>29tn</sup> The Hebrew word *וַמֵּת* (*vamet*) is a Qal perfect with vav consecutive; it means “and he dies” and not “and killed him” (which require another stem). Gesenius notes that this form after a participle is the equivalent of a sentence representing a contingent action (GKC 333 §112.n). The word shows the result of the action in the opening participle. It is therefore a case of murder or manslaughter.

<sup>30sn</sup> See A. Phillips, “Another Look at Murder,” JJS 28 (1977): 105-26.

<sup>31tn</sup> Heb “if he does not lie in wait” (NASB similar).

<sup>32tn</sup> Heb “and God brought into his hand.” The death is unintended, its circumstances outside human control.

<sup>33tn</sup> The word *הִמָּחֵה* (*'ormah*) is problematic. It could mean with prior intent, which would be connected with the word in Prov 8:5, 12 which means “understanding” (or “prudence” – fully aware of the way things are). It could be connected also to an Arabic word for “enemy” which would indicate this was done with malice or evil intentions (U. Cassuto, Exodus, 270). The use here seems parallel to the one in Josh 9:4, an instance involving intentionality and clever deception.

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...anyone hitting a man, and dies, he will be [killed], and (when) he did not lay in wait, and the “**Elohiym**”<sup>Powers</sup> [delivers] him to his hand, (then) I will place an area (for) you (where) he will flee unto, and (if) a man simmers upon his companion to kill him (with) subtlety, you will take him from my altar to die,...

Charles Thomson OT If any one smite another and he die, he shall be put to death. But if he was not a voluntary agent, but God delivered into his hands, I will appoint for thee a place to which he who hath killed shall flee. But if any one lie in wait for his neighbour to kill him insidiously, and flee, thou shalt drag him from my altar to put him to death.

C. Thompson (updated) OT .  
Context Group Version .  
English Standard Version .  
Green’s Literal Translation .  
Modern English Version

#### **The Law About Violence**

He that strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. However, if it was not premeditated, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place where he may flee. But if a man willfully comes upon his neighbor in order to kill him cunningly, then you must take him from My altar, that he may die.

Modern Literal Version .  
Modern KJV .

New American Standard B. **Personal Injuries**

“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. But if he [Lit *he who*] did not lie in wait *for him*, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint



you a place to which he may flee. If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him even from My altar, that he may die.

New European Version

### Regulations about Violent Behavior

One who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death, but not if it is unintentional, but God allows it to happen: then I will appoint you a place where he shall flee. If a man schemes and comes presumptuously on his neighbour to kill him, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

New King James Version

### The Law Concerning Violence

“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.

“But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

Niobi Study Bible

Owen's Translation

Restored Holy Bible 6.0

Updated Bible Version 2.17

A Voice in the Wilderness

Webster's Bible Translation

World English Bible

Young's Literal Translation

Young's Updated LT

“He who strikes a man so that he has died, is certainly put to death; as to him who has not laid wait, and God has brought to his hand, I have even set for you a place where he does flee.

“And when a man does presume against his neighbour to slay him with subtilty, from Mine altar you will take him to die.

**The gist of this passage:**  
12-14

God lays down the laws concerning manslaughter and murder.

## Exodus 21:12

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nākāh (נָכָה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>the one striking [assaulting, hitting]; striking, hitting; defeating, conquering, subjugating</i>	masculine singular, Hiphil participle, construct form	Strong #5221 BDB #645
ʾīysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559



## Exodus 21:12

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** [If] one strikes a man and he has died, he will surely be executed.

People confuse *you will not kill*, a commandment, and understand this to mean that it is a sin to kill anyone at any time. That is not what we are told here. If one man kills another man, then he will be executed—and *executed* is emphasized (we know this because the verb is doubled).

At least one commentator tells us, *well, that's it; whether it is manslaughter or murder, execution is the end result*. However, this is false, because in the next two verses, there will be a careful differentiation between the two, with much different outcomes.

It is very problematic when you take one statement (like v. 12) and accept it as the end-all, be-all. However, vv. 13–14 modify v. 12. V. 13 describes what a man is to do if he is guilty of involuntary manslaughter; and v. 14 is specifically about premeditated murder. When it comes to culpability, these are clearly differentiated in Scripture—spoken by God 3500 years ago—and in today's law.

Exodus 21:12 **"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.** (NKJV)

I personally am at a loss as to the sentencing differences between first and second degree murder. God does not distinguish between having prior intent or murdering someone right on the spot. When you strike a man with the intent of injuring them, whether this is a festering desire for many years or something which suddenly manifests itself; the result should be the same: execution. All men who murder in our system should be executed. There is no excuse for ever allowing a murderer to live out their life on death row; allow them endless chances to appeal on technicalities (and, simultaneously, disallow appeals where there is reasonable indication that the convicted person is innocent); and it is even worse to allow them back on the street. In the way our society has degenerated, it would not be inhumane to sentence 13 and 14 year old murderers to death row and to carry out the sentence quickly.

In our study of the Mosaic Law, this is the first law to carry with it the death penalty presented in the Law.

This is the first appearance of capital punishment in the Mosaic Law and the second in the Old Testament (we first find it in Genesis 9). For this reason, we are going to look at several articles on capital punishment:

This article is taken from the website <http://www.gotquestions.org/>

### What does the Bible say about capital punishment? (From Got Questions)

**Question:** "What does the Bible say about the death penalty / capital punishment?"

## What does the Bible say about capital punishment? (From Got Questions)

**Answer:** The Old Testament law commanded the death penalty for various acts: murder (Exodus 21:12), kidnapping (Exodus 21:16), bestiality (Exodus 22:19), adultery (Leviticus 20:10), homosexuality<sup>26</sup> (Leviticus 20:13), being a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:5), prostitution and rape (Deuteronomy 22:24), and several other crimes. However, God often showed mercy when the death penalty was due. David committed adultery and murder, yet God did not demand his life be taken (2Samuel 11:1-5, 14-17; 2Samuel 12:13). Ultimately, every sin we commit should result in the death penalty because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Thankfully, God demonstrates His love for us in not condemning us (Romans 5:8).

When the Pharisees brought a woman who was caught in the act of adultery to Jesus and asked Him if she should be stoned, Jesus replied, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). This should not be used to indicate that Jesus rejected capital punishment in all instances. Jesus was simply exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus into breaking the Old Testament law; they did not truly care about the woman being stoned (where was the man who was caught in adultery?) God is the One who instituted capital punishment: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man" (Genesis 9:6). Jesus would support capital punishment in some instances. Jesus also demonstrated grace when capital punishment was due (John 8:1-11). The apostle Paul definitely recognized the power of the government to institute capital punishment where appropriate (Romans 13:1-7).

How should a Christian view the death penalty? First, we must remember that God has instituted capital punishment in His Word; therefore, it would be presumptuous of us to think that we could institute a higher standard. God has the highest standard of any being; He is perfect. This standard applies not only to us but to Himself. Therefore, He loves to an infinite degree, and He has mercy to an infinite degree. We also see that He has wrath to an infinite degree, and it is all maintained in a perfect balance.

Second, we must recognize that God has given government the authority to determine when capital punishment is due (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:1-7). It is unbiblical to claim that God opposes the death penalty in all instances. Christians should never rejoice when the death penalty is employed, but at the same time, Christians should not fight against the government's right to execute the perpetrators of the most evil of crimes.

From <http://www.gotquestions.org/death-penalty.html> accessed June 15, 2010. This is an excellent site, by the way, with a great many answers to Biblical questions.

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This article is originally from the website <http://www.apologeticspress.org/>

## Capital Crimes in the Old Testament (Dave Miller)

Very early in human history, God decreed that murderers were to forfeit their own lives: "**Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he the man**" (Genesis 9:6). This standard continued into the Mosaic period (cf. Numbers 35:33). As a matter of fact, the law God gave to Moses to regulate the Israelite nation made provision for at least sixteen capital crimes. In sixteen instances, the death penalty was to be invoked. The first four may be categorized as pertaining to civil matters.

1. Under the law of Moses, the death penalty was required in cases of premeditated murder (Exodus 21:12-14, 22-23; Leviticus 24:17; Numbers 35:16-21). This outcome even included the situation in which two men might be fighting and, in the process, cause the death of an innocent bystander or her unborn infant. It did not include accidental homicide, which we call "manslaughter."

<sup>26</sup> People were not executed for having homosexual desires; they were executed for acting on them.

## Capital Crimes in the Old Testament (Dave Miller)

2. Kidnaping was a capital crime under the Old Testament (Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7). One movie, which was based on an actual incident, depicted the kidnaping of a seven-year-old boy as he was walking home from school. The man who stole him kept him for some seven years, putting the child through emotional and sexual abuse, before the boy, at age fifteen, was finally returned to his parents. He was a different child, and never again would be the same. God would not tolerate such a thing in the Old Testament, and much of the same would be stopped in America if such crimes were taken more seriously.
3. A person could be put to death for striking or cursing his parents (Exodus 21:15,17; Leviticus 20:9). Jesus alluded to this point in Matthew 15:4 and Mark 7:10.
4. Incurable rebelliousness was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 17:12). For example, a stubborn, disobedient, rebellious son who would not submit to parents or civil authorities was to be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

The next six capital crimes can be identified as more specifically pertaining to spiritual matters.

5. Sacrificing to false gods was a capital crime in the Old Testament (Exodus 22:20).
6. Violating the Sabbath brought the death penalty (Exodus 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36).
7. Blasphemy, or cursing God, warranted the death penalty (Leviticus 24:10-16,23).
8. The false prophet, specifically one who tried to entice the people to idolatry, was to be executed (Deuteronomy 13:1-11), as were the people who were so influenced (Deuteronomy 13:12-18).
9. Human sacrifice was a capital crime (Leviticus 20:2). The Israelites were tempted to offer their children to false pagan deities, like Molech. Such acts were despicable to God.
10. Divination, or the dabbling in the magical arts, was a capital crime. Consequently, under Mosaic law, witches, sorcerers, wizards, mediums, charmers, soothsayers, diviners, spiritists, and enchanters were to be put to death (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26,31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:9-14).

The next six crimes pertain to sexual matters.

11. Adultery was punishable by death under the Old Testament (Leviticus 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 22:22). Can you imagine what would happen in our own country if adultery brought the death penalty? Most of Hollywood would be wiped out, as well as a sizeable portion of the rest of our population!
12. Bestiality, i.e., having sexual relations with an animal, was punishable by death (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15-16).
13. Incest was a capital offense in the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:6-17; 20:11-12,14).
14. Homosexual acts could be punished by death (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13).
15. Premarital sex, in some specific instances, brought the death penalty (Leviticus 21:9; Deuteronomy 22:20-21).
16. Rape of an engaged or married woman was a capital crime in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 22:25-27). Again, imagine what would happen in this country if rape brought the death penalty! Much of the unconscionable treatment of women now taking place would be terminated.

## Capital Crimes in the Old Testament (Dave Miller)

Capital punishment was written into God's will for the Jewish nation in the Old Testament. The death penalty was a viable form of punishment for at least sixteen separate offenses. Some people have misunderstood one of the Ten Commandments which says, "**You will not kill**" (Exodus 20:13). They have assumed that the law forbade taking human life under any circumstances. But God required the death penalty for some sixteen crimes. Therefore, the commandment would have been better translated, "**You will not murder.**" In other words, the command was a prohibition against an individual taking the law into his own hands and exercising personal vengeance. But God wanted the execution of law breakers to be carried out by duly constituted legal authorities.

From <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1974> accessed June 15, 2010 (edited).

This article disappeared from Apologetics Press; however, it is also posted here:

<https://truediscipleship.com/capital-punishment-and-the-bible-3/> accessed September 18, 2024.

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I don't necessarily need to redo what has already done. This is an article by Gregory Koukl

## The Bible and Capital Punishment (by Gregory Koukl)

### I. The Bible and Capital Punishment

- a. Capital punishment was commanded by God in the Old Testament.
  - i. It preceded the Mosaic Law. Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.
  - ii. It was based on the dignity of man, i.e. man's transcendent value. Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.
  - iii. It was commanded in the Mosaic Law.
    - (1) Twenty-one different offenses called for the death penalty in the Old Testament.
    - (2) Only three include an actual or potential capital offense, by our standards.
    - (3) Six are for religious offenses.
    - (4) Ten are for various moral issues.
    - (5) Two relate to ceremonial issues.
  - iv. "But King David wasn't put to death for his capital crimes."
    - (1) David understood what justice demanded in this case: "**As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die.**" 2Sam 12:5
    - (2) If God chose to set aside punishment, that doesn't mean the punishment is unjust when it is executed. God was the one who required capital punishment in many instances.
- b. Capital punishment was assumed in the New Testament.
  - i. God ordains governing authorities:
    - (1) John 19:11 **Jesus answered [Pilate], "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above." Romans 13:1-2 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.**
    - (2) 1Peter 2:13-14 **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.**
  - ii. Those governments may practice capital punishment. Romans 13:3-4 **For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.**
    - (1) Acts 25:11 **"If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death,**

## The Bible and Capital Punishment (by Gregory Koukl)

I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

- c. Jesus' ethic of love and forgiveness doesn't disallow capital punishment.
  - i. "But Jesus would forgive."
    - (1) This argument proves too much.
      - (a) It becomes an argument against any punishment what-so-ever.
      - (b) What should we do with the criminal we've forgiven?
      - (c) Life in prison instead of capital punishment?
      - (d) But Jesus would forgive.
    - (2) Jesus never challenged the validity of the death penalty.
      - (a) In John 8:3-11, for example, there were no witnesses left to testify against the woman caught in adultery (the Law required at least two witnesses).
      - (b) Jesus actually upheld the Law here, He didn't abrogate it, but He did so in a way that wouldn't allow the evil designs of the Scribes and Pharisees to be accomplished.
    - (3) Jesus asked God to forgive, not Caesar; He didn't suggest civil punishment or capital punishment was inappropriate.
    - (4) We must argue for the coherence and consistency of both Testaments.
      - (a) The question is not, "Was Jesus right or was Moses right?"
      - (b) We must also factor in Paul and Peter.
  - ii. "Jesus was crucified."
    - (1) I'm not sure what the point is here? Yes, Jesus was the victim of capital punishment, but what follows from that?
    - (2) The real issue regarding Jesus was not capital punishment, but His innocence.
      - (a) Peter assails the act of handing over an innocent man to godless executioners.
      - (b) Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know--this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:22-23)
  - iii. But what about forgiveness?
    - (1) God's mercy is always available in His court.
    - (2) Man's court is another matter, governed by different biblical responsibilities.
- d. One simply can't say that capital punishment is patently immoral on biblical grounds.
  - i. Jesus did not "abolish the Law," He fulfilled it, but not in the sense that all laws are wiped from the books. Then we would have no punishment for any biblical crimes.
  - ii. Matt 5:17-19: Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

### II. Retributionism vs. Rehabilitationism

- a. Each position is based on a particular view of man.
  - i. Rehabilitationism
    - (1) Man is man sick, needing healing.
    - (2) Man is a machine needing fixing.
  - ii. Retributionism
    - (1) Man is a free moral agent who makes choices for which he can be held responsible for.
    - (2) Man is worthy of praise, resulting in reward, or blame, deserving punishment.
- b. The case for retributionism
  - i. Man a free moral agent.



## The Bible and Capital Punishment (by Gregory Koukl)

- (1) He is capable of choosing good or bad behavior.
- (2) He may be influenced by his environment, but not ultimately controlled by it.
- (3) We have an immediate awareness of our moral natures, that we freely make moral choices.
- (4) It seems to make sense to praise and reward good behavior. If we're not responsible for our choices neither blame nor praise make any sense.
- (5) If we are not free agents, then we are determined and therefore not responsible for our behavior, either good or bad. B.F. Skinner was right; we've got to bite the bullet and realize that we're "beyond freedom and dignity."
- ii. Crime is not pathological, deserving rehabilitation, but moral, deserving punishment.
  - (1) The goal of justice is penal, not remedial, moral, not therapeutic.
  - (2) Two purposes of capital punishment:
    - (a) Justice demands punishment of the guilty.
    - (b) Goodness demands protecting the innocent in society.
      - (i) "Capital punishment is to the whole society what self-defense is to the individual." *The Ethics of Life and Death* J.P. Moreland, p. 115.
      - (ii) Dennis Prager: "We have a war going on here between murderers and society, but only one side is allowed to kill." [Prager is describing a society where there is virtually no capital punishment, which is what is taking place in the United States.]
- iii. The punishment should fit the crime (*lex talionis*).
- iv. Capital punishment fits capital crimes (crimes that involve the loss of life).
- c. Objections to retributionism
  - i. Arguments that prove too much.
    - (1) Many arguments against capital punishment prove too much because they apply with equal force against any punishment at all.
    - (2) "Capital punishment is applied unfairly."
      - (a) Even if this were true, the injustice here applies to those that got away, not to those that got punished. It's never unjust to punish a guilty man if the punishment itself fits the crime (*lex talionis*). The injustice is remedied by applying it more often, not less.
      - (b) Better unequal justice than no justice at all.
      - (c) If one man is paid for a job (he gets what he deserves) and another isn't, how do you rectify the inequity? You don't take away what the first man deserves, withholding his pay because the second man didn't get paid. That would double the injustice.
    - (3) "Innocent people get condemned."
      - (a) This is a criticism of any system of justice, not a particular type of punishment. Life is flawed, not capital punishment.
      - (b) Why must we accept a philosophy that says it's better for 100 guilty people to go free than for one innocent person to be condemned?
      - (c) Guilty people repeat crimes that injure and even kill other innocent people.
      - (d) "But death can't be undone." No punishment can be undone.
      - (e) Our attempts at improving justice here must be at the level of the process of adjudication making any determination of guilt more trustworthy.
  - ii. Other objections:
    - (1) "How can you be for capital punishment but against abortion" (the "seamless garment" argument)?
      - (a) The term "Pro-life" is actually a misnomer. Our case is not for every one's life or every form of life. Pro-lifer's are against the unjust taking of innocent human life, particularly the life of the unborn child.
      - (b) The right to life is not an absolute; it can be forfeited. This moral right is only



## The Bible and Capital Punishment (by Gregory Koukl)

- prima facie; it stands only until challenged by some greater law, like justice or protecting the lives of the innocent.
- (c) We also have a right to freedom, but it can be properly overridden with incarceration when certain conditions are met.
  - (d) An unborn child has committed no crime that forfeits its life.
- (2) "Capital punishment is cruel and unusual."
- (a) It's not cruel and unusual, but rather the exact punishment that fits the crime.
  - (b) This is an appeal to the language of the Bill of Rights, but the ones who wrote those words believed in capital punishment. If one wants to redefine the term for modern times, then he cannot argue from the Bill of Rights itself, because that has the old definition.
- (3) "Capital punishment doesn't work; it doesn't deter crime."
- (a) It always deters the offender. Dead people don't commit more crimes.
  - (b) If it lacks in deterrence, it might be because it is not widely exercised or not done speedily enough to be a threat.
  - (c) The principal goal of capital punishment is not deterrence, but punishment. In that way it works every time.
- (4) "Why not a life sentence?"
- (a) Confuses a life sentence with a death sentence.
  - (b) It's unjust (doesn't fit the crime) because the criminal only loses liberty, not life.
- (5) "This kind of death is undignified."
- (a) In one sense, all death is undignified.
  - (b) Argues only against certain aggravated forms of capital punishment and not capital punishment itself.
  - (c) In the final analysis, the question is not the dignity of death, but its equity or justice.
- (6) "There's no opportunity of to reform the criminal." Justice is the goal of punishment, not reform.
- (7) "Capital punishment violates human dignity."
- (a) It is specifically because of man's value and dignity that we punish his moral wrongdoing. We don't punish animals for stealing or killing (we don't punish them, we remove them for our safety).
  - (b) We hold men morally responsible because of dignity.
  - (c) "It is based on the assumption that normal adult beings are rational and moral beings who knew better, who could have done otherwise, but yet who chose to do evil anyway, and who therefore deserve to be punished." JPM p. 118
  - (d) Arguably it is undignified to force rehabilitation on free moral agents who don't want it.
- (8) Roman Catholic objections
- (a) The Catholic position against capital punishment is somewhat ironic given their position on purgatory, in which even when God forgives a sinner, still he must suffer for his own sins.
  - (b) What of the practice of penance?

Taken from: <http://www.str.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5164> accessed June 15, 2010 (slightly edited).

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Exodus 21:12 [\[If one strikes a man and he has died, he will surely be executed.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Here is an article written by George Zeller:

I have updated the language of the King James Bible, which appears to have been the version that Zeller used.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

### What Does the Bible Teach on this Vital Subject? (By George Zeller)

#### 1. Instituted by God Himself

Capital punishment was instituted by God Himself after the worldwide flood. We learn of this in Genesis 9:6 **"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God He made man."** This verse speaks of a murderer, one who knowingly and violently sheds another man's blood, resulting in death. God here gives man the authority and the right and the duty to put to death the murderer: **"by man shall his blood be shed."** The reason given for this is based upon the value and sacredness of human life: **"for in the image of God He made man."** In this case we have justice being carried out according to the rule: **"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth"** (Exodus 21:23-24). The penalty should fit the crime. In this case the crime is murder and the penalty is death. Notice that Genesis 9:6 was given to man even before the law of Moses was given.

#### 2. "Thou Shalt Not Kill"?

Capital punishment is not a violation of the sixth commandment which says, **"You will not kill"** (Exodus 20:13). The proper translation of this verb is **"You will not murder."** See modern translations (such as the NASB, the NIV and the NKJV) and also see Matthew 19:18 in the KJV. All murder is killing but not all killing is murder. Some examples of killing that would not be considered as murder are as follows: a) killing the enemy in war (Bible examples: David killing Goliath, Joshua and the Israelites when they conquered the land); b) a husband, discovering a man about to kill his wife and/or children, protects and defends his family by having to kill the attacker; c) a policeman who kills in the line of duty in order to protect innocent life; d) the person carrying out capital punishment, such as the man who must pull the switch for the electric chair; e) accidental killing, when the killer never intended to take someone's life. We should also note that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will **"judge and make war"** at His second coming resulting in countless numbers of deaths (Revelation 19:11-20).

#### 3. Crimes Punishable By Death

We are assured that capital punishment is not a violation of the Ten Commandments. This is evident when one studies the chapter which immediately follows the ten commandments: Exodus chapter 21 (the Ten Commandments are found in chapter 20). In chapter 21 we learn that God in His law demanded the death penalty for a number of crimes such as murder, kidnapping, cursing parents, etc. See Exodus 21:12,15,16,17. See also Leviticus 20:10-17 for other crimes punishable by death in the law of Moses.

#### 4. The Executioner As God's Servant

In New Testament times capital punishment was still being practiced. Romans 13:4 says that God has given human governments the authority to execute wrath upon evildoers by means of a sword (a common instrument of capital punishment in New Testament days). The Apostle Paul was living in a day when capital punishment was commonly practiced in the Roman empire (quite unlike our day), and yet he did not condemn this practice. On the contrary he described the person who bears the sword as being God's servant. Thus the one punishing the evildoer does so in the exercise of God's delegated authority.

#### 5. An Effective Deterrent

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

### What Does the Bible Teach on this Vital Subject? (By George Zeller)

Capital punishment, when consistently practiced, is a very effective deterrent to crime because the fear of death is the greatest fear that man has (see Hebrews 2:14-15). Since death is the king of fears, a man will think twice about committing a crime if he knows it will cost him his life. He will be less reluctant to murder someone if he knows that the worst that could happen to him is to stay in jail the rest of his life with meals provided, television to watch, etc. When swift justice is carried out then **"those who remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil"** (Deuteronomy 19:20). When the right penalty is not executed speedily, then this is an encouragement to crime (see Eccles. 8:11).

#### 6. Cruel and Inhumane?

Is capital punishment cruel and inhumane? Death is usually not pleasant to witness, and certainly those responsible for putting a criminal to death do not have an enviable task. Nevertheless we need to be careful that we do not focus on the criminal and forget about the victim of the crime. Cold-blooded murder is very cruel and inhumane. Forcible rape is very cruel and inhumane. Hijacking an airplane and endangering the lives of many innocent people is very cruel and inhumane. Pushing life-destroying drugs is very cruel and inhumane. In our zeal to protect the criminal we can lose sight of the terribleness of the crime. Regardless of a person's position on capital punishment, all would have to agree that if a murderer is put to death, he will never murder again. It is remarkable that those people who decry capital punishment as being a cruel and inhumane method of destroying people's lives are often the same people who are strongly in favor of abortion rights. Why does a guilty murderer have a greater right to life than an unborn child?

#### 7. Paul's Own Testimony

What did the Apostle Paul think of capital punishment? Did he consider it to be unfair and cruel and inhumane? We have already considered Paul's teaching in Romans 13, but we should also make note of what the Apostle said in Acts 25:11: **"If I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die."** Paul knew that there were certain crimes that were worthy of death, and he knew that those guilty of such crimes must be executed. If he was guilty of such, then he would not refuse to die. He would submit to capital punishment if he had done deeds worthy of such. Of course, Paul was innocent of any such crimes, and yet he was eventually executed under Nero. For what crime? For preaching the gospel of the grace of God!

#### 8. Bright Barbarians

Even uncultured men know deep down in their hearts that certain crimes demand the death penalty. This is illustrated in Acts 28 when Paul was shipwrecked upon the island of Melita (Malta) where he met a group of kindly barbarians (v.1-2). As Paul was gathering sticks for the fire, a deadly venomous snake bit him on the hand. Normally such a bite would be fatal in a matter of minutes. When the natives saw this they said, **"No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the [judgment of the] sea, yet justice does not allow him to live"** (v.4). These natives saw what they thought was the penalty (death) and thus they assumed the crime (he must be a murderer). They soon learned that they were mistaken, but the point is that these barbarians had a built in sense of justice and they knew that murderers should pay for their crime by death.

#### 9. The Testimony of a Thief (Robber)

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

### What Does the Bible Teach on this Vital Subject? (By George Zeller)

In Luke chapter 23 we have the honest testimony of a man who was being put to death for crimes he had done. This was capital punishment by means of Roman crucifixion. This man was an evildoer, he was arrested, and he was found guilty of crimes worthy of death. Modern methods of execution are generally very mild and painless as compared to Roman crucifixion. What did this man think of capital punishment? Was he opposed to it? Did he consider it to be cruel and inhumane? Did he think it to be unfair and unjust? Here is his testimony (his words to the other condemned criminal): **"Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds"** (Luke 23:40-41). In other words, he was saying, "We are getting exactly what we deserve: death by crucifixion. What we have done is worthy of death!" Before men and before human government most of us are not guilty of crimes worthy of death. However, before a Holy God every one of us needs to recognize that we have done certain things that are worthy of death (see Romans 1:29-32; 6:23a). As the Old Testament says, **"The soul that sins, it shall die"** (Ezekiel 18:4). How thankful we should be that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered the death penalty for us: **"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8).

#### 10. The Death of an Innocent Man

If capital punishment is practiced, are there not times when an innocent man is pronounced guilty and put to death? Yes, sadly this is true. Our judicial system is far from perfect and there are times when the guilty are justified and the innocent are condemned (compare Deuteronomy 25:1). Even without the death penalty, it is true that occasionally some innocent men are sent to prison even for life. We must remember that there is in heaven a true and righteous Judge who sees all and who knows all and who someday will make right all that is wrong and will straighten out all that is crooked. In eternity, all will be corrected (see Luke 16:25 for an example of this). The greatest example of an innocent man being put to death is that of the Lord Jesus Himself, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1Peter . 2:22). The only sinless Man who ever lived was condemned to death by crucifixion! As we think about Christ's death, we must remember that it was for our sins that He suffered and bled and died (1Corinthians 15:3; Romans 5:8). **For Christ also having once suffered for (our) sins, the Just (the Righteous One) for the unjust (the unrighteous ones), that He might bring us to God** (1Peter 3:18). We are the guilty ones who deserved the death penalty (Romans 6:23), but Jesus paid it all! He died so that we might live (John 5:24)!

From: <http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org/doctrine/capitalp.htm> accessed June 15, 2010.

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What started us off on the examination of killing versus murder was v. 12:

The Contemporary English Version simplifies things up for us:

Exodus 21:12 **Death is the punishment for murder.** (CEV)

The Bible becomes a bit more specific at this point. This is because all killing is not murder. Many times, what is key is what is in the thinking of the person doing the killing. However, since we cannot really determine what that is, we rely on actions to clarify the type of killing with take place.

#### Exodus 21:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Exodus 21:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
tsâdâh (צָדָה) [pronounced tzaw-DAW]	<i>to lie in wait for; to hunt, to chase; to lay desolate, to destroy, to lay waste; to hunt</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6658 BDB #841

**Translation:** And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him],...

Here, the Bible distinguishes between murder and manslaughter. Let's say someone has been killed, but the killer did not lie in wait with the intention of harming him. *Lying in wait* would be premeditation. *Not lying in wait* would indicate no premeditation.

## Exodus 21:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced aw-NAW]	<i>to meet with anyone, to allow to meet, cause to meet; to cause anything to happen to anyone</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #579 BDB #58
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control; responsibility</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand,...

This is a difficult phrase to translate. I believe the idea here is, God allows this to happen, and that a death does take place, but it is unintentional. There are no specific circumstances given, because unintentional deaths can occur in a myriad of ways. For one man, it is the time that God calls him.

Here are some other translations:

Exodus 21:13a-b *If, however, he did not lie in wait, but God allowed it to happen,...* (Berean Study Bible)

Exodus 21:13a-b *But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand,...* (ESV)

Exodus 21:13a-b *However, if he did not lie in wait, but God allowed the meeting into his hand,...* (Voice in the Wilderness)

Exodus 21:13a-b *And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him], and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This is a reasonably literal translation, yet it is still difficult to sort out. The text is very general, not describing a specific set of circumstances which result in one man dying. However, the One Who has caused this to take place is God. The volition of the man who remains alive is not a factor. We understand this to mean involuntary manslaughter.

When X waits for Y in order to kill him, X is guilty of premeditated murder. V. 13b essentially says that the killing was not premeditated and that God allowed this to take place.

Exodus 21:13c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced <i>seem</i> ]; also spelled sûwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i> ]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מִקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nûwç (נוּחַ) [pronounced <i>noose</i> ]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to retreat, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb with the directional hê	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
This simply means <i>there</i> ; hê acts almost like a demonstrative. Owens calls this a locational hê.			

**Translation:** ...I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.



When some dies at the hand of another, there are going to be situations which arise as a result. The family of the deceased may want some form of justice, no matter what. They may seek this man's life, even if the death was accidental.

God is going to set up a place where a person who committed involuntary manslaughter may flee. These are known as cities of refuge. One of the main things here is, to take the person who committed this act and get him out of town. You want there to be distance between that person and the family of the deceased. The city of refuge allows for that distance.

All of the details for these places will be given at a later date. Obviously, Israel is not yet settled, so where these cities are makes little difference to them.

Nevertheless, the concept is this: if a man is guilty of manslaughter, but did not intentionally kill a person, then his life will be spared. However, he will have to leave his city or town, and go to an altar designated by God, and grab on to that altar. God protects his life but God does not let him return to his hometown.

Exodus 21:13 *And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him], and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand, I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This is involuntary manslaughter—precise details are not given because there can be so many different circumstances; however, here, someone has killed another man without meaning to. God will set up cities of refuge where such a one can go to be protected from execution.

Exodus 21:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
zûd (זָד) [pronounced zood]	<i>to cook; to seethe, to act proudly, to act presumptuously, to act with insolence [or, arrogantly]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #2102 BDB #267
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside; because of, on account of</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
rêaʿ (רֵעַ) [pronounced RAY-ahg]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945

**Translation:** When a man acts treacherously against his neighbor,...

Let's say that the killing involved some form of **mental attitude sin**; such as pride or seething with anger, etc. Then this is no longer a case of involuntary manslaughter. There is a clear motivation, which is a mental attitude sin or cluster of mental attitude sins.

Exodus 21:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
hârag (גרַה) [pronounced haw-RAHG]	to kill, to slay, to execute; to destroy, to ruin	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2026 BDB #246
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿor <sup>e</sup> mâh (רַמַּע) [pronounced gor-MAW]	craftiness, guile, cunning; prudence; with bêyth, craftily	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6195 BDB #791
This word can be used in a good or bad sense.			

**Translation:** ...to kill him with guile,...

The killing involved some form of craftiness or cunning or guile. So, there was some sort of premeditation. There was some planning out. It is this cunning or guile, revealed by developing a plot to kill another, which is revealed in the preliminary actions.

Exodus 21:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced geem]	with, at, by, near	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Together, these prepositions mean: from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.			
miz <sup>e</sup> bêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced miz-BAY-ahkh]	altar; possibly monument	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #4196 BDB #258

## Exodus 21:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** ...you will take him from My altar and [he will] die.

Even if such a one flees to the altar in a city of refuge, God calls for his removal and for him to be executed. So, just because a person runs to the altar of God and grabs onto it, that does not mean that they are automatically adjudged to be innocent. God's altar did not become an automatic safe zone. In a circumstance as defined here, someone who has grabbed onto the altar may be dragged away to be executed.

You will find the laws of God to be quite straightforward, and capital punishment is often what is required.

Exodus 21:14 *When a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, to kill him with guile, you will take him from My altar and [he will] die.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

When you hear of the refuge cities, the first thing you think of is, *what about the guilty murderer who flees to them.* Therefore we have this ordinance: this is a person who planned out the murder and then escaped to a refuge city. This person is to be taken from God's altar and put to death. An occurrence of this is recorded in 1Kings 2:28–34. Despite the sacredness of the altar, there is no clemency for a murderer. A criminal does not escape justice through some loophole in the Mosaic Law. We could learn from that.

Exodus 21:12–14 *[If] one strikes a man and he has died, he will surely be executed. And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him], and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand, I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. When a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, to kill him with guile, you will take him from My altar and [he will] die.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:12–14 *If one man strikes another, so that he dies, the killer will certainly be executed. However, if he does not lie in wait intending to harm him, then I will appoint a place where he may flee to. But, when a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, killing him with guile, you will take him from the altar and execute him.* (Kukis paraphrase)

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The context is a series of laws, most of which, in vv. 12–29, prescribe execution for the perpetrator of the crime. Apart from this understanding, a review of a few previous verses would be not be appropriate, as there is no context apart from them all being laws with consequences (also known as, *judgments*). If there is a logical progression from one law to the next, I don't yet see it.

<b>And the one striking his father and his mother, dying, he will be put to death.</b>	Exodus 21:15	<b>The one striking his mother or father will certainly be put to death.</b>
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**The one striking his mother or father will surely be executed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And the one striking his father and his mother, dying, he will be put to death.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	Whosoever striketh his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he who woundeth his father or his mother shall die by strangling. Lit., "by suffocation with the towel."
Revised Douay-Rheims	He that strikes his father or mother, shall be put to death.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"Anyone who attacks his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	Whoever smites his father or his mother, let him be certainly put to death.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Any man who gives a blow to his father or his mother is certainly to be put to death.
Easy English	You must kill anyone who attacks his father or his mother.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	"Whoever hits their father or their mother must be killed.
God's Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
The Message	"If someone hits father or mother, the penalty is death.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	"Anyone who attacks their father or mother must be put to death.
New Simplified Bible	»He who strikes (beats) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Death is the punishment for attacking your father or mother.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	"Whoever hits his father or his mother will be put to death.
New Living Translation	.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	<sup>15</sup> Whoever beats his father or mother must be put to death, <sup>16</sup> and whoever curses his father or mother must die. [The AEB groups vv. 15 and 17 (which is v. 16
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everywhere else). Although the AEB usually follows the LXX, that does not appear to be the case here.]

Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Anyone who violently hits their father or mother should be put to death.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Death is the penalty for one who kills his father or his mother; death is the penalty when a man is shewn to have carried off his fellow-man and sold him; death is the penalty for one who curses father or mother. Vv. 16–17 are included for context.
Translation for Translators	Anyone who strikes his father or mother must surely be executed.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	Anyone who strikes his father or his mother will certainly be executed.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And whoever assaults his father or his mother; He shall be killed.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he that smites his father or his mother, shall die for it.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"Anyone who attacks [Or kills] their father or mother is to be put to death.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And who strikes his father and his mother, will be killed dead.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And he who strikes his father or his mother, he, being put to death, shall be put to death.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	Whoever strikes father or mother shall be put to death.* * [21:15] The verb used most often signifies a violent, sometimes deadly, attack. The severe penalty assigned is intended to safeguard the integrity of the family.
New English Bible—1970	Whoever strikes his father or mother shall be put to death.
New Jerusalem Bible	.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And he who smites his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.
Tree of Life Version	"Anyone who strikes his father or his mother must surely be put to death..

## Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	WHOEVER SMITES HIS FATHER OR HIS MOM, LET HIM BE CERTAINLY PUT TO DEATH.
Awful Scroll Bible	He striking his father or his mother, as to dying was he to die.
Charles Thomson OT	.
Concordant Literal Version	The smiter of his father or his mother shall be put to death, yea death.
Darby Translation	.
exeGeses companion Bible	And he who smites his father, or his mother, in deathifying, deathify him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he that striketh down his av, or his em, shall be surely put to death.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	.

## Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	.
The Expanded Bible	"Anyone who hits [strikes] his father or his mother must be put to death.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death. So highly was the honor of parents esteemed in the sight of God that the mere act of striking either of them was equivalent to manslaughter, to cold-blooded murder, and was punished accordingly.
Syndein/Thieme	.
The Voice	Also, anyone who strikes one of his parents must be put to death.

## Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	And one who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
	<p><b>And one who strikes his father or his mother:</b> Since we learned that one who strikes one's fellow is liable to make monetary compensation (Exod. 21:18, 19, 24, 25), but he is not liable to death, the text had to state that one who strikes his father is liable to the death penalty, but he is not liable except for a blow that causes a wound. -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 84b]</p> <p><b>his father or his mother:</b> Either this one or that one. -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 85b]</p> <p><b>shall surely be put to death:</b> by strangulation. -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 85b]</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p><i>Injuring a Parent</i></p> <p>Whoever intentionally injures his father or mother shall be put to death.</p> <p><b>injures</b></p> <p>Causing bleeding (Sanhedrin 84b).</p>
NET Bible®	<p>"Whoever strikes<sup>34</sup> his father or his mother must surely be put to death.</p> <p><sup>34sn</sup> This is the same construction that was used in v. 12, but here there is no mention of the parents' death. This attack, then, does not lead to their death – if he killed one of them then v. 12 would be the law. S. R. Driver says that the severity of the penalty was in accord with the high view of parents (Exodus, 216).</p>

## Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and anyone hitting his father (or) his mother, will :surely: be [killed],...
Charles Thomson OT	.
C. Thompson (updated) OT	.
Context Group Version	.



English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	And he who strikes his father or his mother dying shall die.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	And he who slays his father or his mother, will surely be put to death.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	And he who strikes his father or his mother shall be executed to death.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	"Anyone who attacks his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"And he who strikes his father or his mother is certainly put to death.

**The gist of this passage:** A person who strikes his mother or father will face capital punishment.

### Exodus 21:15

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	the one striking [assaulting, hitting]; striking, hitting; defeating, conquering, subjugating	masculine singular, Hiphil participle, construct form	Strong #5221 BDB #645
'âb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; ancestor, grandfather; founder, civil leader, military leader; master, teacher	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth]	to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

## Exodus 21:15

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *The one striking his mother or father will certainly be put to death.*

Striking either parent does not necessarily mean murder or manslaughter. Nor does the result necessarily need to be bleeding, as one Hebrew rabbi believed. This would have simply been hitting either parent. This kind of disrespectful behavior was not tolerated in Hebrew society; and the Law prescribed death for such a child.

This is a protection designed for a family and for the family unit. This traditional family unit in God's view is fundamental to human society. This is true whether we are speaking of believers or unbelievers. These laws and the punishments applied to all Hebrew people, whether they believed in their God or not.

Exodus 21:15 *The one striking his mother or father will certainly be put to death.*

This offense is so serious that it does not matter whether this child (or young man) injures either parent. Just the idea of striking one's very own parent is so abhorrent to God (as it should be to anyone) that such a person is executed.

That law does not work both ways, however. The parent may discipline his child.

In many cases, a parent, having been struck in private, would have to choose to bring this to court. Quite obviously, this would be very difficult for any parent to do, unless his child was completely out of control. Although we do not have any recorded instances of this taking place, that does not mean it did not.

Exodus 21:15 *The one striking his mother or father will surely be executed.*

**And the one stealing a man—and he had sold him and he is found in his hand—dying he will die.**

Exodus  
21:16

**[Regarding] one who steals a man—and he has sold him or he is found with him [lit., *in his hand*]*—he will certainly die.***

**If a person steals a man and sells him or is caught with the man in his possession, he will surely be executed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

*And the one stealing a man—and he had sold him and he is found in his hand—dying he will die.*

Dead Sea Scrolls

.

Jerusalem targum

.

Targum (Onkelos)

*And whosoever stealeth a soul of the house of Israel and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall be surely put to death.*

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he who stealeth a soul of the children of Israel, and selleth him, or if he be found in his possession, shall die by strangling.
Revised Douay-Rheims	He that shall steal a man, and sell him, being convicted of guilt, shall be put to death.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"Anyone who kidnaps someone and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	He who steals a person and sells him, or he is found in his possession, he shall surely be put to death.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	Whosoever shall steal one of the children of Israel, and prevail over him and sell him, and he be found with him, let him certainly die.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Any man who gets another into his power in order to get a price for him is to be put to death, if you take him in the act.
Easy English	You must kill anyone who steals another person. He might sell him or keep him. You must kill the bad man when you catch him.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	"Whoever steals someone to sell them as a slave or to keep them for their own slave must be killed.
God's Word™	"Whoever kidnaps another person must be put to death, whether he has sold the kidnapped person or still has him.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"Whoever kidnaps someone, either to sell him or to keep him as a slave, is to be put to death.
The Message	"If someone kidnaps a person, the penalty is death, regardless of whether the person has been sold or is still held in possession.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. "Anyone who kidnaps and sells another person must be put to death. If they still have the person with them when they are caught, they must be put to death.
New Simplified Bible	»Whoever kidnaps another person must be put to death regardless of whether he has sold the kidnapped person or still has him.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Death is the punishment for kidnapping. If you sell the person you kidnapped, or if you are caught with that person, the penalty is death.
The Living Bible	"A kidnapper must be killed, whether he is caught in possession of his victim or has already sold him as a slave.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	"Whoever steals a man and sells him, or keeps him for himself, will be put to death. Whoever curses his father or his mother will be put to death.
New Living Translation	"Kidnappers must be put to death, whether they are caught in possession of their victims or have already sold them as slaves.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'If someone overpowers and kidnaps one of the children of IsraEl and sells him, or if he's caught with him; [the kidnapper] must die.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Anyone who kidnaps a person, whether they have been sold or are still being held, should be put to death.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	.
Translation for Translators	Anyone who kidnaps another person, either in order to sell that person or to keep him as a slave, must be executed.

### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If a man kidnaps another man and sells him, or if that other man be found in his hands, the kidnapper will certainly be executed.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Whoever steals a man and sells him; when he is caught he shall be put to death.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	He that steals a man and sells him (if it be proved upon him) shall be slain for it.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	"Whoever kidnaps a person, whether he has sold him or whether the victim [Lit. <i>he</i> ] is still in his possession, is certainly to be put to death.
Jubilee Bible 2000	Likewise he that steals a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper's possession.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And who steals a man and sells him and it is found in his hand, will be killed dead.

### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells him or is found holding him captive, shall be put to death.
The Heritage Bible	And he who steals a man, and sells him, and he is found in his hand, he, being put to death, shall be put to death.
New American Bible (2002)	"A kidnaper, whether he sells his victim or still has him when caught, shall be put to death.
New American Bible (2011)	A kidnapper, whether he sells the person or the person is found in his possession, shall be put to death. Dt 24:7.
New English Bible—1970	.
New Jerusalem Bible	Anyone who abducts a person -- whether that person has since been sold or is still held -- will be put to death.
New RSV	Whoever kidnaps a person, whether that person has been sold or is still held in possession, shall be put to death.
Revised English Bible—1989	Whoever kidnaps an Israelite must be put to death, whether he has sold him, or the man is found in his possession.

### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	"Whoever kidnaps someone must be put to death, regardless of whether he has already sold him or the person is found still in his possession.
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exeGeses companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.
Tree of Life Version	"Anyone who steals a person and sells him, or is found with him under his hand, must surely be put to death.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	WHOSOEVER SHALL STEAL ONE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND PREVAIL OVER HIM AND SELL HIM, AND HE BE FOUND WITH HIM, LET HIM CERTAINLY DIE.
Awful Scroll Bible	He stealing a man, even is to have him sold, having found him in his hand, as to dying was he was to die.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version	. He who steals a man whether he sells him or he is found in his hand, he shall be put to death, yea death.
Darby Translation	.
exeGeses companion Bible	And he who steals a man and sells him, or if they find him in his hand, in deathifying, deathify him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he that kidnaps an ish, and selleth him, or if he be found in his power, the kidnapper shall surely be put to death.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	"And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he shall be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	.
The Expanded Bible	"Anyone who kidnaps someone and either sells him as a slave or still has him when he is caught [ <sup>L</sup> he is found in his hand] must be put to death.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Man-stealing, as a violent abuse of one's neighbor's person, of his dignity as a human being, was also placed on a plane with murder.
Syndein/Thieme	{Theft and Slave Trade} And he who steals a man, and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
The Voice	Anyone who kidnaps another—whether he has already sold his victim or still has him when he is caught—must be put to death.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	And whoever kidnaps a man and sells him, and he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.
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**And whoever kidnaps a man:** Why was this said [here since the law of kidnapping is mentioned elsewhere (Ho'il Moshe)]? Since it says (Deut. 24:7): "Should a man be found stealing a person from among his brothers" [meaning from the children of Israel, and he has worked with him and sold him, that thief shall die, and you shall clear away the evil from your midst]. [From here] I know only [that] a man who kidnapped a person [is liable to death]. How do I know if a woman, one of indeterminate sex, or a hermaphrodite kidnap [a person, that they too are liable to death]? Therefore, the Torah states: "And whoever kidnaps a man and sells him..." And since it says here: "And whoever kidnaps a man," I know only that one who kidnaps a man [is liable to death]. How do I know that if one kidnaps a woman [he is also liable... to death]? Therefore, the Torah states (Deut. 24: 7): "stealing a person." Therefore, both of them [both verses] were needed; what one [verse] left out the other [verse] filled in [lit., revealed]. -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 85b]

**and he is found in his possession:** [i.e., this means] that witnesses saw him that he kidnapped him and sold him, and he [the kidnapped man] was found in his hand prior to the sale. -[From Mechilta]

**shall surely be put to death:** By strangulation. Every death penalty mentioned in the Torah without qualification is strangulation (Mechilta, Sanh. 84b). [God] interrupts the subject [of discussing sins against parents] and writes, "and whoever kidnaps a man" between [the verses] "one who strikes his father or his mother" and "one who curses his father or his mother." It appears to me that that is [the underlying reason for] the controversy [found in Sanh. 85], that one Tannaic master believes that we are comparing striking [someone] to cursing [i.e., just as one is liable only if one curses a person who keeps the commandments as befits a Jew (see Exod. 22:27), so too is one liable only for striking a person who keeps the commandments, but not for striking a Cuthite], and the other master believes that we do not compare cursing to striking [and thus one would be liable for striking a Cuthite even though he does not keep the commandments]. -[Rashi, referring to Sanh. 85b]

Kaplan Translation

*Kidnaping*

If one person kidnaps and sells another, and [the victim] is seen in his hand, then [the kidnapper] shall be put to death.

**seen**

By witnesses (Mekhilta; Rashi). Literally, 'found.' Cf. Deuteronomy 24:7. [Because of the footnote, the first thing I did was check the Hebrew; there is no word for see in this verse.]

NET Bible®

"Whoever kidnaps someone<sup>35</sup> and sells him,<sup>36</sup> or is caught still holding him,<sup>37</sup> must surely be put to death.

<sup>35tn</sup> Heb "a stealer of a man," thus "anyone stealing a man."

<sup>36sn</sup> The implication is that it would be an Israelite citizen who was kidnapped and sold to a foreign tribe or country (like Joseph). There was always a market for slaves. The crime would be in forcibly taking the individual away from his home and religion and putting him into bondage or death.

<sup>37tn</sup> Literally "and he is found in his hand" (KJV and ASV both similar), being not yet sold.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and anyone stealing a man and sells him (or) is found in his hand , he will :surely: be [killed],...

Charles Thomson OT

C. Thompson (updated) OT . He who steals any of the children of Israel, and having got him in his power sells him, or if he be found with him, will be put to death.

Context Group Version

English Standard Version . "Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.



Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	"He who kidnaps [Lit <i>steals</i> ] a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession [Lit <i>hand</i> ], shall surely be put to death.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	He who steals a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall be executed to death.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	"Anyone who kidnaps someone and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"And he who steals a man, and has sold him, and he has been found in his hand, is certainly put to death.

**The gist of this passage:** Death is the penalty for kidnaping.

Exodus 21:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gânab (גָּנַב) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>[the one] stealing [from], [one who] takes [by theft or deceit]</i>	Qal active participle; construct form	Strong's #1589 BDB #170
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** [Regarding] one who steals a man...

This verb is *gânab* (גָּנַב) [pronounced *gaw-NAH<sup>B</sup>V*], which means, *to steal, to take away by theft; to deceive*. Strong's #1589 BDB #170. Strictly speaking, *kidnaping* with current criminal motivations is not really an ancient crime, but one which is relatively new for man.

Let me suggest two possible circumstances of *man-stealing*. In one case, it is a slave who is taken from his owner. In another case, this could apply to someone who is simply taken and sold into slavery (like Joseph in the book of Genesis). The Bible condemns this sort of thing in the strongest terms, and, interestingly enough, does not really distinguish between these two types of *man-stealing*.

However, this is one of the distinguishing factors between legitimate slavery and illegitimate slavery given in the Bible. In the United States, we practiced slavery which involved *man-stealing*. In other words, those who engaged in this sort of thing were violating the Mosaic Law from the very beginning. That in particular made our practice of slavery reprehensible and in violation of Scripture. We in the United States did not specifically *man-steal*, but we paid those who did (Africans and Muslims who captured and sold Africans and others as slaves).

Man-stealing violates the sanctity of the family unit (one of the **divine institutions**) and the breaking of this law violates a man's volition. This violates the freedom of his soul, which is the first divine institution.

### Exodus 21:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i> ]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control; responsibility</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...—and he has sold him or he is found with him [lit., *in his hand*]—...

The person who steals this man (of course, this could apply to a woman) is guilty, no matter where the man might be found. The guilty person might still be in possession of this man or he may have sold the man to someone else. The act itself, which is an ancient form of *kidnaping*, is punishable by death.

Today, kidnaping has several motivating factors. Some kidnap with the intent of placing a person into a decade of sexual slavery or a lifetime of physical slavery. This form of man-stealing has made a big return in this past decade, taking place daily on the border of the United States and Mexico (this is taking place primarily between 2021–2024).

### Exodus 21:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** ...he will certainly die.

This violation of the law will make a person guilty of man-stealing (the ancient form of kidnaping) and the penalty is death.

Exodus 21:16 [Regarding] one who steals a man—and he has sold him or he is found with him [lit., in his hand]—he will certainly die. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The translation *kidnap* here is unfortunate. Kidnaping has become a worldwide crime, but the kidnappers either exploit the one who has been kidnaped (by making them slaves) or they seek to take money from the family of the person kidnaped. Now and again, kidnaping is done for political or religious reasons. The act is the same, but current motivations and ancient motivations are different (except for what is taking place on the U.S.-Mexico border and at other similar borders).

In the ancient world, a person would be snatched pretty much for one reason—to make that person a slave. This treatment of other human beings has made its modern-day comeback and many claim that slavery in the United States today far exceeds slavery from time prior to the Civil War.

Let's look at some other translations which I think are more accurate than the NKJV:

Exodus 21:16 "Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death. (ESV) The MLV2020, Green's literal translation, LSV and Webster (along with many others) are all very similar to the ESV.

The first verb is translated either *to steal* or *to kidnap*, that latter making up perhaps a third of the English translations.

There is no doubt that you have heard the claim that the Bible supports slavery and that means that the Bible adheres to some old fashioned morality which is no longer relevant. That is simply wrong.

There are different kinds of slavery which have different reasons for such slavery to come about. We have previously discussed one where a family was so poor that it had to sell their own daughter to a more affluent family so that the daughter would be taken care of in her life (Exodus 21:7–11). One which we have not yet discussed is, when one nation defeated another nation in war, one outcome was to take some or all of the survivors of the defeated nation and put them into slavery (as opposed to just killing them all).

However, the type of slavery with which we are most familiar—as it was clearly a part of our American history (and a part of the history of most nations) is slavery which has come about because a man or woman has been kidnaped and then sold into slavery. In the Bible, that is illegal and the person who does such a thing is subject to capital punishment.

**Moses could have banned...** (a meme); from **Southern Skeptic**; accessed November 13, 2024.

So, as a matter of fact, God, through Moses, did ban some forms of slavery. Specifically God banned the form of slavery that we practiced in the United States. This ban required death for the person who kidnaped a man for the purpose of putting him into slavery.



Exodus 21:16 [Regarding] one who steals a man—and he has sold him or he is found with him [lit., in his hand]—he will certainly die. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Although the Massoretic text does not include the phrase, *of the sons of Israel*, it is found in the western Aramaic and in the Greek versions. This is kidnaping and forced slavery. This is the mandate which was violated when we originally had slavery in the United States.

From the Complete Apostles' Bible: *Whosoever shall steal one of the children of Israel, and prevail over him and sell him, and he be found with him, let him certainly die.* (Exodus 21:16; CAB) This is what is found in the Greek Septuagint. My Aramaic versions do not have the limitation of this being *of the children of Israel*.

I mention this simply because it is a meaningful textual difference (perhaps 98% of the textual differences are unimportant). This seems to be an unnecessary qualification, as a person could steal a non-Israelite slave (a slave from another country, owned by an Israelite), and they would certainly be punished with the same punishment.

Exodus 21:16 *If a person steals a man and sells him or is caught with the man in his possession, he will surely be executed.* (Kukis paraphrase)

**[This is a note to myself:** I originally translated this *A man that steals, whether he sells it [the stolen property] or it is found in his possession—he shall be put to death.* Several translations use the word *him* throughout this verse. The masculine singular suffix can be translated *him* or *it*. Context here, since we are speaking of what has been stolen, means that we will translate this as a neuter (the Greek has the three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter; but the Hebrew does not). In our English, we do very little genderizing; and certainly not what the Greeks and Hebrews did—apply a gender to every noun.]

<b>And the one cursing his father and his mother, dying will be put to death.</b>	Exodus 21:17	<b>Anyone who curses his mother or his father will certainly be put to death.</b>
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**Anyone who curses his mother or father will surely be executed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And the one cursing his father and his mother, dying will be put to death.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And he who curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he who curseth his father or his mother by the Great Name, [Or, "by thr Name of Manifestation;" the Shem Hamephirash] dying he shall die by being stoned with stones.
Revised Douay-Rheims	He that curses his father, or mother, shall die the death.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	He that reviles his father or his mother shall surely die.

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	Any man cursing his father or his mother is to be put to death.
Easy English	You must kill anyone who curses his father or his mother.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	"Any person who curses his father or his mother must be killed.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	"Whoever curses their father or mother must be killed.
God's Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
The Message	"If someone curses father or mother, the penalty is death.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	"Anyone who asks for something bad to happen to their father or mother must be put to death.
New Simplified Bible	.

**Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:**

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Death is the punishment for cursing your father or mother.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	.
New Living Translation	"Anyone who dishonors[b] father or mother must be put to death. Greek version reads Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of. Compare Matt 15:4; Mark 7:10.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Anyone who curses or insults his father or his mother must be killed.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	Anyone who curses their father or mother should be put to death.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	.
Translation for Translators	Anyone who reviles/curses his father or his mother must be executed.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	Anyone who slights his father or his mother will certainly be executed.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Whoever curses his father or mother; he shall be put to death.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he that curses his father or mother, shall be put to death for it.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	"Whoever curses his father or his mother is certainly to be put to death.
Jubilee Bible 2000	In the same manner he that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And who curses his father and his mother, will be killed dead.



**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And he who makes light of his father or his mother, he, being put to death, shall be put to death.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	Whoever curses* father or mother shall be put to death. Lv 20:9; Prv 20:20; Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10. * [21:17] <b>Curses:</b> not merely an angrily uttered expletive at one's parents, but a solemn juridical formula of justifiable retribution which was considered to be legally binding and guaranteed by God.
New English Bible—1970	.
New Jerusalem Bible	.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	Whoever reviles his father or mother shall be put to death.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	.
exeGeses companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And he who curses his father or his mother, dying he shall die.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And he who curses his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.
Tree of Life Version	"Whoever curses his father or his mother must surely be put to death.

**Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:**

Alpha & Omega Bible	HE THAT REVILES HIS FATHER OR HIS MOM SHALL SURELY DIE.
Awful Scroll Bible	He making light of his father or mother, as to dying was to die.
Charles Thomson OT	.
Concordant Literal Version	The one maledicting his father or his mother shall be put to death, yea death. [There is nothing worse than a maledictor.]
Darby Translation	.
exeGeses companion Bible	And he who abases his father, or his mother, in deathifying, deathify him.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he that curseth his av, or his em, shall surely be put to death.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"Whoever [c]urses his father or his mother or treats them contemptuously must be put to death.
The Expanded Bible	"Anyone who ·says cruel things to [curses] his father or mother must be put to death.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. Since the cursing and reviling of parents flows from the same wicked disposition of mind as striking them, the same punishment is decreed by God.
Syngein/Thieme	.
The Voice	And anyone who curses either of his parents must be put to death. Mark 7:10



## Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

And one who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

**And one who curses his father or his mother:** Why was this said? Since [Scripture] says: “any man, any man who curses his father [or his mother shall surely be put to death]” (Lev. 20:9). [From there] I know only that if a man curses his father [he is liable to death]. How do I know that if a woman curses her father [she too is liable to death]? Therefore, Scripture says [here]: “And one who curses his father or his mother...” It makes an unqualified statement, meaning whether it is a man or a woman. If so, why does it say, “any man who curses” ? [In order] to exclude a minor. -[From Mechilta]

**shall surely be put to death:** By stoning. Wherever it says: “his blood is upon him,” [it means that he is to be put to death] by stoning. The model for all of them is “with rocks they shall stone them; their blood is upon them” (Lev. 20:27). Regarding the one who curses his father, it says: “his blood is upon him” (Lev. 20:9). -[From Mechilta; Sanh. 66a; Sifra, end of Kedoshim]

Kaplan Translation

*Cursing a Parent*

Whoever curses his father or mother shall be put to death.

**Whoever curses**

See Leviticus 20:9.

NET Bible®

**“Whoever treats his father or his mother disgracefully<sup>38</sup> must surely be put to death.**

<sup>38tn</sup> The form is a Piel participle from קָלַל (qalal), meaning in Qal “be light,” in Piel “treat lightly, curse, revile, declare contemptible, treat shamefully.” (See its use in Lev 19:14; Josh 24:9; Judg 9:26-28; 1 Sam 3:13; 17:43; 2 Sam 16:5-13; Prov 30:10-11; Eccl 7:21-22; 10:20.) It is opposite of “honor” (כָּבַד, kaved; Qal “be heavy”; Piel “honor,” as in 20:12) and of “bless.” This verse then could refer to any act contrary to the commandment to honor the parents. B. Jacob (Exodus, 640) cites parallels in Sumerian where people were severely punished for publicly disowning their parents. “21:15, 17 taken together evoke the picture of parents who, physically and verbally, are forcibly turned out of the house (cf. Prov. 19:26)” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:148).

## Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and anyone belittling his father (or) his mother, he will :surely: be [killed],...

Charles Thomson OT .

C. Thompson (updated) OT .

Context Group Version .

English Standard Version "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

Green’s Literal Translation .

Modern English Version .

Modern Literal Version .

Modern KJV .

New American Standard B. .

New European Version .

New King James Version "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Niobi Study Bible .

Owen’s Translation .

Restored Holy Bible 6.0 And he who cursing father or mother, let him die the death. Mat 15:4 .

Updated Bible Version 2.17 .

A Voice in the Wilderness And he who curses his father or his mother shall be executed to death.

Webster’s Bible Translation .

World English Bible "Anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Young’s Literal Translation .

Young’s Updated LT "And he who is reviling his father or his mother is certainly put to death.

**The gist of this passage:** The child who curses his parents is subject to the death penalty.

Exodus 21:17			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâlal (קלל) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAL</i> ]	<i>cursing, execrating; seeing as despicable; making despicable</i>	Piel participle; construct state	Strong's #7043 BDB #886
'âb (אב) [pronounced <i>aw<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; ancestor, grandfather; founder, civil leader, military leader; master, teacher</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êm (אם) [pronounced <i>aim</i> ]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *Anyone who curses his mother or his father will certainly be put to death.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

A question that comes to me is why do these laws skip around? At first, they seemed to be organized; the first few verses dealt with the male Hebrew slave, the next few with the Hebrew female purchased; however, these last few verses are applications of the fifth and sixth commandments, yet they are not in any sort of order; they go S 6 5 S 5 6 S 6 S 6 (S = slavery; 5 = 5<sup>th</sup> commandment; 6 = 6<sup>th</sup> commandment). I am not certain why most of the laws concerning slavery are not dealt with, then applications of *honor your father and mother* and then *you will not murder*. In any case, vv. 15 and 17 are applications of the fifth commandment.

There is no mistaking the Bible's strong authoritarian bend and the absolute necessity for total respect afforded to one's parents. Here death is promised for those who even just curse their parents. However, in thinking back on several of my friends and relatives, those who were less disciplined and had less authority orientation (and bore disrespect for their parents) generally seemed to make poorer decisions in their lives; decisions whose effects seemed to last longer. This law here demands much greater authority orientation.

In vv. 15 & 17, we can see just how important respect for one's father and mother are. If a child simply curses his mother or father, he is subject to execution.

A parent may choose to endure such treatment from a child, but if this takes place in public, the child would face the consequences of the law.

I would think that there would be potential wide application here, as parents might be cursed in a variety of ways.

Matthew 15:4 **For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'** (ESV)

Mark 7:10 **For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'** (ESV)

A number of offenses, their results, and appropriate punishments are covered in vv. 18–32. Sometimes, the required punishment is death. So, these judgments look at the question, when does an offense become a capital offense?

Exodus 21:17 **Anyone who curses his mother or his father will certainly be put to death.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:17 **Anyone who curses his mother or father will surely be executed.** (Kukis paraphrase)

This is one of those classic cases where, as a translator, I know what is being said; however, I need to translate it carefully with the given text, so that it does not appear that I am taking too many liberties. Notice, in my mostly literal translation, there are 4 insertions of additional text.

**And when dispute men and he strikes his neighbor in a stone or in [his] fist and he does not die and he has fallen to a bed; if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, and is acquitted the one striking. Only his loss of time he will give and restoring, he will restore.**

Exodus  
21:18–19

**When [two] men quarrel and the one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with [his] fist, but he does not die but has lain down on a bed; if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, then the one striking [him] is acquitted. However, he will give [restoration] for his lost time and he will [see to it] that he is healed.**

**When two men are in an altercation, and one strikes the other with his fist, or with a stone or something else, but the other does not die, but is bedridden. Then his outcome will be monitored. If he is able to later get up and walk about outside with the aid of a staff, then the one who hit him will be acquitted of any crime. However, he will pay for his lost time and he will see to it that the man he struck is fully healed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And when dispute men and he strikes his neighbor in a stone or in [his] fist and he does not die and he has fallen to a bed; if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, and is acquitted the one striking. Only his loss of time he will give and restoring, he will restore.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Jerusalem targum

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Targum (Onkelos)	And when men contend, and a man smiteth his neighbour with a stone or with his fist, and he die not, but fall upon his bed; if he rise (again) and walk about upon his staff, he who smote him shall be acquitted; only he shall make good his loss of labour, and defray the charge of the physician.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And when men strive together, and one smite his neighbour with a stone, or with his fist, so that he die not, but fall ill, if he rise again from his illness, and walk in the street upon his staff, he who smote him shall be acquitted from the penalty of death; only for his cessation from labour, his affliction, his injury, his disgrace, and the hire of the physician, he shall make good until he be cured.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If men quarrel, and the one strike his neighbour with a stone or with his fist, and he die not, but keeps his bed: If he rise again and walk abroad upon his staff, he that struck him shall be quit, yet so that he make restitution for his work, and for his expenses upon the physicians.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.) Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. "If men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he does not die, but is confined to bed; if he rises again and walks around with his staff, then he who struck him shall be cleared: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for his healing until he is thoroughly healed.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T. Plain English Aramaic Bible Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	. . And if two men quarrel, and one strikes another with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is put to bed from the injury: If he rises again and walks in the street with his staff, then the one who struck him shall be acquitted, except that he shall pay for the loss of his time and the physicians fee.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if two men revile each other and smite the one the other with a stone or his fist, and he die not, but be laid upon his bed; if the man arise and walk abroad on his staff, he that smote him shall be clear; only he shall pay for his loss of time, and for his healing.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If, in a fight, one man gives another a blow with a stone, or with the shut hand, not causing his death, but making him keep in bed; If he is able to get up again and go about with a stick, the other will be let off; only he will have to give him payment for the loss of his time, and see that he is cared for till he is well.
Easy English	Perhaps two men may quarrel. One man hits the other man with a stone or with his fist. The second man does not die but he has to stay in bed. Then he gets up and walks about outside, with his stick. Then nobody will judge the first man. But he must pay the man whom he hurt. This man cannot work until he is completely well again.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001 Easy-to-Read Version–2006	. "Two men might argue and one might hit the other with a rock or with his fist. If the man who was hurt is not killed, the man who hurt him should not be killed. If the man was hurt and must stay in bed for some time, the man who hurt him must support him. The man who hurt him must pay for the loss of his time. He must support him until he is completely healed.
God's Word™	"This is what you must do whenever men quarrel and one hits the other with a rock or with his fist and injures him so that he has to stay in bed. If the injured man can get up again and walk around outside with a cane, the one who hit him must not be punished. He must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and for all his medical expenses.

Good News Bible (TEV)	“If there is a fight and someone hits someone else with a stone or with his fist, but does not kill him, he is not to be punished. If the one who was hit has to stay in bed, but later is able to get up and walk outside with the help of a cane, the one who hit him is to pay for his lost time and take care of him until he gets well.
<i>The Message</i>	“If a quarrel breaks out and one hits the other with a rock or a fist and the injured one doesn’t die but is confined to bed and then later gets better and can get about on a crutch, the one who hit him is in the clear, except to pay for the loss of time and make sure of complete recovery.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. “Suppose two people get into a fight and argue with each other. One hits the other with a stone or his fist. And the person who was hit does not die but has to stay in bed. And later that person gets up and walks around outside with a walking stick. Then the person who hit the other person will not be held responsible. But that person must pay the one who was hurt for the time spent in bed. The one who hit the other person must be sure that person is completely healed.
New Simplified Bible	»When men quarrel and one hits the other with a rock or with his fist and injures him so that he has to stay in bed you must do this. »If the injured man is able to stand up again and walk around outside with a cane, the one who hit him must not be punished. He must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and for all his medical expenses.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Suppose two of you are arguing, and you hit the other with either a rock or your fist, without causing a fatal injury. If the victim has to stay in bed, and later has to use a stick when walking outside, you must pay for the loss of time and do what you can to help until the injury is completely healed. That's your only responsibility.
The Living Bible	“If two men are fighting, and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist and injures him so that he must be confined to bed, but doesn’t die, if later he is able to walk again, even with a limp, [literally, “if he walks abroad with his staff.”] the man who hit him will be innocent except that he must pay for the loss of his time until he is thoroughly healed, and pay any medical expenses.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	“When men argue and one hits the other with a stone or with his hand, and he does not die but has to stay in bed because of it, then if he gets up and walks around outside using his walking stick, the one who hit him will not be punished. He will only pay for the loss of his time. And he will take care of him until he is healed.
New Living Translation	“Now suppose two men quarrel, and one hits the other with a stone or fist, and the injured person does not die but is confined to bed. If he is later able to walk outside again, even with a crutch, the assailant will not be punished but must compensate his victim for lost wages and provide for his full recovery.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Suppose two people fight, and one hits the other with a stone or his fist. Suppose the person he strikes does not die but is injured and has to stay in bed for a while, but later he is able to walk outside using a cane. Then they must not punish the person who hit him, except that they must make him pay the injured person the money he could not earn while he was recovering as well as the costs for healing.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	‘If two men are shouting at each other and one hits the other with a rock or with his fist, and he doesn’t die but is laid up in bed; the man who hit him will be cleared if
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the other person can get up and walk (even with the aid of a cane), as long as he pays for the lost time and the cost of his healing.

Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	When two people are fighting and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist so that he is in bed for a while but doesn't die— if he recovers and is able to walk around outside with a cane, then the one who hit him shouldn't be punished, except to pay for the loss of time from work and to pay for his full recovery.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Two fall out, and one is struck with a stone, or with the fist, not fatally, but so that he must take to his bed; must the man who struck the blow be held guilty? Only till the other is well enough to get up and walk abroad with a stick; but he must compensate him for his loss of work, and for the doctor's charges.
Translation for Translators	Suppose two people fight, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist. And suppose the person he strikes does not die but is injured and has to stay in bed <i>for a while</i> , and later he is able to walk outside using a cane. Then the person who struck him does not have to be punished. However, he must pay the injured person the money he could not earn <i>while he was recovering</i> , and he must also pay the injured person's medical expenses until that person is well.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If men are fighting with one another, and one of them strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and the other man does not die, but is made bedridden: If that man gets up again and is able to walk again using a staff, then the one who struck him will be acquitted—but he must recompense him for lost worktime and see to his complete recovery. This is the first victim's compensation statute on record.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And when men contend, and a man assaults his neighbour with a stone or a clod, but he does not die, yet is reduced to his bed, if he recovers and can walk out upon his crutch, and he escapes from the injury, except his loss of time, he shall be compensated, and the physician paid for his cure.
God's Truth (Tyndale) HCSB	. "When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist, and the injured man does not die but is confined to bed, if he can later get up and walk around outside leaning on his staff, then the one who struck him will be exempt from punishment. Nevertheless, he must pay for his lost work time [Lit <i>his inactivity</i> ] and provide for his complete recovery.
International Standard V	"If people quarrel and one strikes the other with a rock or his fist, and he does not die but ends up <sup>m</sup> in bed, and the injured person <sup>n</sup> then gets up and walks around outside with the help of his staff, <sup>o</sup> the one who struck him is not liable, except that he is to compensate him for his loss of time <sup>p</sup> and take care of his complete recovery. <i>m</i> 21:18 Lit. <i>falls</i> <i>n</i> 21:19 Lit. <i>he</i> <i>o</i> 21:19 Lit. <i>with his staff</i> <i>p</i> 21:19 Lit. <i>his rest</i>
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"If people quarrel and one person hits another with a stone or with their fist [Or <i>with a tool</i> ] and the victim does not die but is confined to bed, the one who struck the blow will not be held liable if the other can get up and walk around outside with a staff; however, the guilty party must pay the injured person for any loss of time and see that the victim is completely healed.



Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	If men fight and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist, and that person does not die, but is confined to his bed; then if he recovers and is able to walk about using his staff, the man who struck him must pay for the loss of his time; he must also pay for his complete recovery. But that man is not guilty of murder.
Urim-Thummim Version	And if men fight together and one strikes another with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is bedridden, if he gets up and walks around on his staff, then will he that struck him be exempt from punishment. He will only pay for the loss of his time and will see that he is completely healed.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And if men will argue, and a man struck his brother with a rock or with a fist, and did not die, but fell to bed. If he got up and walked around outside, on his supports, then the blow is absolved. Only his idleness will he compensate, and his healing heal.

### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	When men quarrel and one strikes another with a stone or with his fist so that the man is confined to bed, but after that he gets up and walks about with the help of a stick, the man who struck the blow will not be held as a criminal. He will, however, pay the injured man for loss of time and see that he is completely healed.
The Heritage Bible	.
New American Bible (2002)	"When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, not mortally, but enough to put him in bed, the one who struck the blow shall be acquitted, provided the other can get up and walk around with the help of his staff. Still, he must compensate him for his enforced idleness and provide for his complete cure.
New American Bible (2011)	When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, not mortally, but enough to put him in bed, the one who struck the blow shall be acquitted, provided the other can get up and walk around with the help of his staff. Still, he must compensate him for his recovery time and make provision for his complete healing.
New English Bible—1970	When men quarrel and one hits another with a stone or with a spade Or fist, and the man is not killed but takes to his bed; if he recovers so as to walk about outside with a stick, then the one who struck him has no liability, except that he shall pay for loss of time and shall see that he is cured.
New Jerusalem Bible	'If people quarrel and one strikes the other a blow with stone or fist so that the injured party, though not dead, is confined to bed, but later recovers and can go about, even with a stick, the one who struck the blow will have no liability, other than to compensate the injured party for the enforced inactivity and to take care of the injured party until the cure is complete.
New RSV	When individuals quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or fist so that the injured party, though not dead, is confined to bed, but recovers and walks around outside with the help of a staff, then the assailant shall be free of liability, except to pay for the loss of time, and to arrange for full recovery.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	"If two people fight, and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist, and the injured party doesn't die but is confined to his bed; then, if he recovers enough to be able to walk around outside, even if with a cane, the attacker will be free of liability, except to compensate him for his loss of time and take responsibility for his care until his recovery is complete.
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Syndein/Thieme	<p>and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit, be released from the probable charge of manslaughter; <b>only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed</b>; he shall make good the loss occasioned by the enforced idleness and pay the doctor bills and the medicine.</p> <p><b>And if men strive together, and one smites/strikes another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keeps his bed . . .</b> {idiom for being bedridden} <b>if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he who smote him be quit/'purged from guilt'.</b> {means he will not be put to death since the victim did not die} <b>Only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.</b></p>
The Voice	<p>If people are engaged in an argument and one hits the other with a rock or his fist, and the victim does not die but is bedridden <i>for a time and unable to work</i>, then the one who struck him will not be punished as long as the injured party recovers enough to be able to get out of bed and walk around with the help of his staff; however, he must pay his victim for lost time <i>and wages</i>, and make sure he has the care he needs until he recovers.</p>

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	<p>And if men quarrel, and one strikes the other with a stone or with a fist, and he does not die but is confined to [his] bed,...</p>
	<p><b>And if men quarrel:</b> Why was this said? Since it says: "An eye for an eye" (Exod. 21:24), we learn only [that if one assaults his fellow, he must pay] the value of his limbs [which he amputated or rendered permanently useless], but [payment for] idleness and healing we have not [yet] learned. Therefore, this section, [which delineates those payments,] was stated. -[From Mechilta]</p> <p><b>but is confined to [his] bed:</b> Heb. בְּקִשְׁמָל לִפְנֵי, as the Targum [Onkelos] renders: וְלִטְוֵבָל, and he falls into idleness, [meaning] into an illness that prevents him from working.</p> <p>...if he gets up and walks about outside on his support, the assailant shall be cleared; he shall give only [payment] for his [enforced] idleness, and he shall provide for his cure.</p> <p><b>on his support:</b> Heb. וְתַרְבִּישָׁם-לֵע, with his health and his strength. -[From Mechilta].</p> <p><b>the assailant shall be cleared:</b> Now would it enter your mind that one who did not kill should be killed? But rather, [the Torah] teaches you here that they imprison him until it becomes apparent whether this one [the victim] will get well, and this is its meaning: When this one gets up and walks on his support, then the assailant shall be cleared, but before this one [the victim] gets up, the assailant shall not be cleared. -[From Keth. 33b]</p> <p><b>only [payment] for his [enforced] idleness:</b> Heb. וְתַרְבִּישָׁ, the [enforced] idleness from his work due to the illness. If he cut off his hand or his foot, we assess [payment for] the idleness as if he were a watchman of a cucumber field, because even after [recovery from] the illness, he is not fit for work that requires a hand or foot, and he [the assailant] already gave him as payment for his damage the value of his hand and his foot, as it is said: "a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot" (Exod. 21:24). -[From B.K. 83b, 85b, Tosefta B.K. 9:1]</p> <p><b>and he shall provide for his cure:</b> As the Targum [Onkelos] renders: and he shall pay the physician's fee.</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p><i>Personal Injury</i></p> <p>[This is the law] when two men fight, and one hits the other with a stone or with [his] fist. If [the victim] does not die, but becomes bedridden, and then gets up and can</p>

walk under **his own power**, the one who struck him shall be acquitted. Still, he must pay for [the victim's] loss of work, and must provide for his complete cure.

### **fist**

(Ramban; Ibn Ezra; Septuagint; cf. Kelim 17:12; Bava Kama 90b; Isaiah 58:4). Or, 'something hard' (Saadia; Ibn Janach); 'a clod of earth' (Radak, Sherashim; Ibn Ezra on Isaiah 58:4); 'thrown stone or brick' (Rashbam; Arukh s.v. kurmiza, from Targum); or 'club' (Arukh HaShalem s.v. kurmiza).

### **his own power**

(Targum; Mekhilta; Rashi; Yad, Rotzeach 7:4). Or, 'and can walk with his cane' (cf. Ramban).

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"If men fight, and one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with his fist and he does not die, but must remain in bed,<sup>39</sup> and then<sup>40</sup> if he gets up and walks about<sup>41</sup> outside on his staff, then the one who struck him is innocent, except he must pay<sup>42</sup> for the injured person's<sup>43</sup> loss of time<sup>44</sup> and see to it that he is fully healed.

<sup>39tn</sup> Heb "falls to bed."

<sup>40tn</sup> "and then" has been supplied.

<sup>41tn</sup> The verb is a Hitpa'el perfect with vav (ו) consecutive; it follows the sequence of the imperfect before it – "if he gets up and walks about." This is proof of recovery.

<sup>42tn</sup> The imperfect tense carries a nuance of obligatory imperfect because this is binding on the one who hit him.

<sup>43tn</sup> Heb "his"; the referent (the injured person) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>44tn</sup> The word appears to be the infinitive from the verb "to sit" with a meaning of "his sitting down"; some suggest it is from the verb "to rest" with a meaning "cease." In either case the point in the context must mean compensation is due for the time he was down.

### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and (if) men must dispute, and a man will hit his companion (with) a stone, or (with) a fist, and he does not die, (then) he will fall to the laying place, if he will rise, and he walks himself (to) the outside upon his staff, (then) the one hitting him will be acquitted, only his ceasing he will give him and he will be :completely: healed,...
Charles Thomson OT	If two men quarrel and one smite the other with a stone or his fist and he dieth not, but is confined to his bed; if the man rise and walk abroad on his staff, he who smote him shall be acquitted but shall pay for his loss of time and the expence of his cure.
C. Thompson (updated) OT	.
Context Group Version	.
English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	"If men have a quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but <sup>[n]</sup> remains in bed, if he gets up and walks around outside on his staff, then he who struck him shall go unpunished; he shall only pay for his <sup>[o]</sup> loss of time, and <sup>[p]</sup> shall take care of him until he is completely healed. n. Exodus 21:18 Lit <i>lies</i> o. Exodus 21:19 Lit <i>his sitting</i> p. Exodus 21:19 Lit <i>healing, he shall cause to be healed</i>
New European Version	.
New King James Version	"If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted [ <i>exempt from punishment</i> ]. He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed.
Niobi Study Bible	.

Owen's Translation  
 Restored Holy Bible 6.0  
 Updated Bible Version 2.17  
 A Voice in the Wilderness

If men strive with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be healed of his injuries.

Webster's Bible Translation  
 World English Bible  
 Young's Literal Translation  
 Young's Updated LT

"And when men contend, and a man has smitten his neighbour with a stone, or with the fist, and he die not, but has fallen on the bed; if he rise, and has gone up and down without on his staff, then has the striker been acquitted; only his cessation he giveth, and he is thoroughly healed.

### The gist of this passage:

When two men get into a fight and one of them is severely injured, the person who did the injuring will not be punished, but he will have to see to the hospital bills and lost wages of the one he hurt.

18-19

## Exodus 21:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
rîyb (רִיב) [pronounced <i>reeb</i> ]	<i>to strive [physically or with words]; to quarrel, to debate, to contend, to dispute; to conduct a case or suit [against someone], to make a complaint [against someone]; to find fault</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7378 BDB #936
ʾănâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i> ]; ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers; some of the men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** When [two] men quarrel...

Here, we are going to deal with a situation where there is shared responsibility. Two men are in an altercation. At some point, this argument escalates into a fight. This situation understands both of the men to be equally at fault. Let me suggest that, within the time of this altercation, either man could have walked away.

## Exodus 21:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
rêa' (עַר) [pronounced <i>RAY-ahg</i> ]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH<sup>B</sup>-ven</i> ]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular nounno,	Strong's #68 BDB #6
'ôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'eg <sup>e</sup> rôwph (אֶרְוֹף) [pronounced <i>eg<sup>e</sup>-ROHF</i> ]	<i>fist</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #106 BDB #175

**Translation:** ...and the one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with [his] fist,...

One of the men strikes the other with a stone or with his fist. So, both are participating in this argument, but one man takes it to the next level, and assaults the other.

This assault puts the other man down.



## Exodus 21:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mishkâb (מִשְׁכָּב) [pronounced <i>mish-AW<sup>e</sup>V</i> ]	<i>bed, couch; bier; laying down, the act of lying down</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4904 (from #7901) BDB #1012

**Translation:** ...but he does not die but has lain down on a bed;...

The injured man does not die, but he is seriously injured. He spends some time being bedridden due to his injuries. So, the one man still standing took this argument to quite the next level.

Exodus 21:18 When [two] men quarrel and the one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with [his] fist, but he does not die but has lain down on a bed;... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Here we have a fight, the action is not premeditated, but it escalates to violence that could result in death; however, in this first example, it does not. At the end of this verse we have the Qal perfect of nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced *naw-FAHL*] and it has a wide variety of applications. It generally means *fall*, however, in the Qal perfect (Genesis 4:6 15:12 Exodus 19:21, 33) it can mean *to die*.

## Exodus 21:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

Exodus 21:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qûwm (קום) koom[pronounced ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk [up and down, about]; to wander, to prowl; to go for oneself, to go about, to live [walk] [in truth]; to flow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
chûts (חוץ) (חיצו) [pronounced khoots]	<i>outside, outward; street</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2351 BDB #299
‘al (לע) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside; because of, on account of</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
mish <sup>ec</sup> eneth/mish <sup>ec</sup> enah (הַנֶּעֱשָׂה/תִּנְעָשָׂה) [pronounced mish <sup>e</sup> -GEH-neth (nah)]	<i>staff; political support, support staff, support and staff</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4938 BDB #1044

**Translation:** ...if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff,...

V. 19 does have a few problems and nuances to deal with. Owen has the person struck walking *abroad* as does *The Emphasized Bible*. *Walk* is in the Hithpael perfect; the Hithpael is the reflexive of the Piel, which is the intensive stem. The perfect tense is completed action. In the Hithpael perfect, the concept here is that the person walks to and fro, in this direction or that. It means *to walk about*. This is simply an indication that this person has mostly recovered. Chûts (חוץ) (חיצו) [pronounced khoots] means *outside, in the streets, outside of a tent*, etc. The phrase *with a staff* could be misconstrued to indicate that there had been some permanent damage and that he had to walk with a cane; however, it reads *with his staff*, which is par for the course. The sons of Israel wandered throughout the desert and almost every man carried a staff.

Now, let's say that the injured man recovers. He is able to, at some later date, rise up and walk about. Maybe he needs a cane or staff (what that means in this passage is debatable). So, in other words, the injury is quite severe.

We should understand that this principle applies for a minor to a severe injury as the outcome.

## Exodus 21:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâqâh (נָקָה) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to be acquitted, unpunished, declared free or declared guiltless; to be free [from punishment or obligation]; to be cleaned [purged] out</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong #5352 BDB #667
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>the one striking [assaulting, hitting]; striking, hitting; defeating, conquering, subjugating</i>	masculine singular, Hiphil participle, construct form	Strong #5221 BDB #645

**Translation:** ...then the one striking [him] is acquitted.

The Niphal perfect of nâqâh (נָקָה) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*] means *to be empty, to clean*. The Niphal perfect is passive completed action; in this stem and case it means *acquitted*. Then we have a very rarely used word: shebeth (שֶׁבֶת) [pronounced *SHE<sup>B</sup>-veth*] found only in this passage, Proverbs 20:3 and Isaiah 30:7. It is closely related to the words *rest, cease, and Sabbath*. So what we are dealing with here is a portion of time where this person was unable to work; he had ceased from his labors, but not voluntarily. *Loss of time* expresses the concept of this word quite well.

Both men are in a fight; they are fighting each other. The one man is not going to be arrested simply because he won the fight.

There is not going to be a crime placed against the one doing the striking. He is not going to be dealt with as the men in previous verses were dealt with (execution). However, this does not mean that he is off the hook. He did the injuring and he will be responsible for causing these injuries.

## Exodus 21:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
raq (רַק) [pronounced <i>rahk</i> ]	<i>only, provided, altogether, surely; in any case; but; nevertheless</i>	adverb of limitation or of restrictive force	Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956
It is also a prefix to a sentence to add a limitation to something previously expressed, in which case it is rendered <i>only</i> . It is used to emphasize single words, especially adjectives, in which case it can be <i>only</i> but also <i>nought but, nothing but</i> . After a negative, it can be rendered <i>save, except</i> . I used <i>however</i> in Exodus 21:19, in order to set up a contrast with the word <i>acquitted</i> .			
shebeth (שֶׁבֶת) [pronounced <i>SHE<sup>B</sup>-veth</i> ]	<i>cessation, rest, interruption, loss of time</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7674 BDB #443
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

## Exodus 21:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râphâ' (רָפָא) [pronounced <i>raw-FAW</i> ]	<i>to heal, to have healed; to repair [restore, fix]; used figuratively of a nation undergoing suffering</i>	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #7495 BDB #950
râphâ' (רָפָא) [pronounced <i>raw-FAW</i> ]	<i>to heal, to have healed; to repair [restore, fix]; used figuratively of a nation undergoing suffering</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7495 BDB #950

**Translation:** However, he will give [restoration] for his lost time and he will [see to it] that he is healed.

This verse ends with the Qal imperfect of *give, put, set*, a conjunction, and the Piel infinitive absolute and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular Piel imperfect of the verb (used twice) râphâ' (רָפָא) [pronounced *raw-FAW*] which means *heal*.

The injured man is going to lose time in recovery. The man who assaulted him must cover him for this time. Furthermore, the one doing the assaulting must also pay for and help out until the injured party is fully healed.

Here, it is fascinating where these two men who had been in such an argument to the point where violence breaks out—they are required to enter into a relationship of sorts until the injured party is fully healed.

As Conservapedia points out: *This is the first victim's compensation statute on record.*<sup>27</sup>

The man winning the fight and injuring the other must pay this man for the time he is down and unable to work; and pay for his injuries to be healed. However, he is not guilty of a crime. He will not suffer any additional punishment.

Exodus 21:19 ...if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, then the one striking [him] is acquitted. However, he will give [restoration] for his lost time and he will [see to it] that he is healed. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Obviously, there were some liberties taken with the translation of this verse (in almost anyone's translation, as a matter of fact). However, the meaning is quite clear. Both men are guilty of losing their tempers and entering into a brawl. However, the winner of this brawl is the one who makes restitution to the loser. For the time that it takes the person who was struck to recover, the winner will compensate him; and he will continue to compensate him until he is completely healed (this is the doubling of the verb *heal*).

Exodus 21:18–19 When [two] men quarrel and the one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with [his] fist, but he does not die but has lain down on a bed; if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, then the one striking [him] is acquitted. However, he will give [restoration] for his lost time and he will [see to it] that he is healed. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Although there is no criminal liability here, the man who did the beat down is to help restore the time lost and for the injuries suffered by the man he beat down.

I cannot help but think that, psychologically, for both men, this would be a good thing.

<sup>27</sup> From [https://www.conservapedia.com/Exodus\\_21-26\\_\(Translated\)](https://www.conservapedia.com/Exodus_21-26_(Translated)) accessed July 6, 2019.

I trust that you are beginning to recognize that these laws are not backward, old fashioned or out-of-date but are remarkably sophisticated, despite having been given 3500 years ago. We understand that from the principle that God gave these laws.

Exodus 21:18–19 When two men are in an altercation, and one strikes the other with his fist, or with a stone or something else, but the other does not die, but is bedridden. Then his outcome will be monitored. If he is able to later get up and walk about outside with the aid of a staff, then the one who hit him will be acquitted of any crime. However, he will pay for his lost time and he will see to it that the man he struck is fully healed. (Kukis paraphrase)

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What we are about to study is this:

Exodus 21:20–21 When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished. But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., *he*] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., *he*] [is] his silver. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The liberal critic might object to what is said here; but what we are about to study is way ahead of its time. In that era, for the most part, slaves were simply property. They could be beat to death in many societies by the master, without any concern for cause. They belonged to the master, they were property, and as such, had no rights. Let's say you own a book and decide to toss it into the trash, no one would hold you morally responsible for the discarding of that book, as it is your property. This very much describes how some societies viewed the terminal beat down of a slave.

The Bible considers the humanity of the slaves and treats them with some dignity. The end result we may or may not think it to be moral today; but these laws are way ahead of their time. Furthermore, we need to bear in mind that these are laws for Israel in the era that we are studying (circa 1445 B.C.). It was very common for one country to conquer another and to take its remaining people as slaves. When a people were conquered, one of two things happened: (1) the people were taken out of their land and they became slaves (which is the alternative to being killed); or (2) the people remained in the land, but they paid tribute to their conquerors (Genesis 14 gives us an illustration of this). In the case of paying tribute, the only way out is war or negotiation. Not many conquering countries want to reduce their income through negotiations.

Therefore, the reality of the situation is, in some cases, there were slaves who did not want to be slaves and they might even bear some feelings of ill will. No matter what the circumstance, they were still subject to the authority of the slave owner.

For some people, it is, *give me liberty or give me death*; and for others it is, *okay, you win; give me life at least*. At one time, there was a common saying in the United States, *better red than dead*. It means, better to give in to a communist invasion rather than to resist it.

There is another issue, and that is the stark contrast between the interpretations of some translations. Among the less literal translations, there is an impression given that, the slave is beaten, he survives a day or two, but then dies—and no punishment is required. That is the wrong understanding of this passage. The master may give a severe beating to his servant, but the servant is *standing* after a day or two. That is much different than barely hanging on and then dying. If the servant dies at the hand of the master, the master would certainly be punished.

And when strikes a man his servant or his maid with the rod, and he has died under his hand, punishing he will be punished. But if a day or two days he remains, he will not be punished, for his silver [is] he.

Exodus  
21:20–21

When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished. But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., **he**] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., **he**] [is] his silver.

Let's say a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and that servant dies from the blow, the master will certainly be punished. However, if the servant recovers in a day or two, then the master will not be punished, for the slave is his valuable property.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And when strikes a man his servant or his maid with the rod, and he has died under his hand, punishing he will be punished. But if a day or two days he remains, he will not be punished, for his silver [is] he.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And when a man smiteth his servant or his handmaid with a staff, and he die under his hand, condemned he shall be condemned. But if he survive one day, or two, he shall not be condemned, because he was his money..
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And when a man hath smitten his Kenaanite man servant or maid servant with a staff, and he die the same day under his hand, he shall be judged with the judgment of death by the sword. But if the wounded person continue one or two days from time to time, he shall not be (so) judged; because with money he had bought him.
Revised Douay-Rheims	He that strikes his bondman or bondwoman with a rod, and they die under his hands, shall be guilty of the crime. But if the party remain alive a day or two, he shall not be subject to the punishment, because it is his money.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he gets up after a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his property.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And if a man strikes his servant, or his maid with a staff, and he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. But if the victim is well after a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if a man smite his man-servant or his maid-servant, with a rod, and the party die under his hands, he shall be surely punished. But if the servant continue to live a day or two, let not the master be punished; for he is his money.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If a man gives his man-servant or his woman-servant blows with a rod, causing death, he is certainly to undergo punishment. But, at the same time, if the servant goes on living for a day or two, the master is not to get punishment, for the servant is his property.
Easy English	Perhaps a man may hit his male or female slave with a stick. If the slave dies because of this, you must punish the man. But if the slave becomes well again after one or two days, do not punish the man. The slave is his own.



Easy-to-Read Version—2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	“Sometimes people beat their slaves. If the slave dies after being beaten, the killer must be punished. But if the slave gets up after a few days, then the master will not be punished. [Or “punished for murder.”] That is because someone paid their money for the slave, and the slave belongs to them.
God’s Word™	“Whenever an owner hits his male or female slave with a stick so that the slave dies from the beating, the owner must be punished. But if the slave gets up in a day or two, the owner must not be punished. The slave is his property.
Good News Bible (TEV)	“If a slave owner takes a stick and beats his slave, whether male or female, and the slave dies on the spot, the owner is to be punished. But if the slave does not die for a day or two, the master is not to be punished. The loss of his property is punishment enough.
The Message	.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	“Suppose a person beats their male or female slave to death with a club. That person must be punished. But they will not be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two. After all, the slave is their property.
New Simplified Bible	»If a slave owner takes a stick and beats his slave, whether male or female, and the slave dies on the spot, the owner is to be punished. »If the slave lives a few days after the beating, you are not to be punished. After all, you have already lost the services of that slave who was your property.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Death is the punishment for beating to death any of your slaves. However, if the slave lives a few days after the beating, you are not to be punished. After all, you have already lost the services of that slave who was your property.
The Living Bible	“If a man beats his slave to death—whether the slave is male or female—that man shall surely be punished. However, if the slave does not die for a couple of days, then the man shall not be punished—for the slave is his property.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	“When a man hits his male or female servant with a stick so that he or she dies, he will be punished. But if he or she lives a day or two, he will not be punished, for his servant belongs to him.
New Living Translation	“If a man beats his male or female slave with a club and the slave dies as a result, the owner must be punished. But if the slave recovers within a day or two, then the owner shall not be punished, since the slave is his property.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	If someone hits his male or female slave with a stick, and if the slave dies, then the one who struck him must be punished. But if the slave lives for a day or two after he is hit and then dies, you must not punish the one who hit him. Not having that slave to be able to work for him any longer is enough punishment. [Sometimes, these less-than-literal translations can be quite helpful; and, other times, quite misleading. This translation has the slave holding onto life for a day or two and then dying; with the result that his master is not punished. That is not at all what the text says.]
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	‘If a man hits his male or female slave with a cane and the person dies as the result, he must be punished. However if the slave continues to live a few days after that, the master shouldn’t be punished because it’s his own loss.
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Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	When a slave owner hits a male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies immediately, the owner should be punished. But if the slave gets up after a day or two, the slave owner shouldn't be punished because the slave is the owner's property.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	When a man beats his servant or his handmaid to death, if death follows at once, he must pay the full penalty; but if they survive for a day or more, he shall go unpunished; the loss is his.
Translation for Translators	If someone strikes his male or female slave with a stick, if the slave dies ◀immediately/as a result▶ [IDM], the one who struck him must be punished. But if the slave lives for a day or two after he is struck <i>and then dies</i> , you must not punish the one who struck him. Not having that slave to be able to work for him any longer is enough punishment.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If a man strikes his manservant or maidservant with a club, and the servant dies at his hand, then the dead person shall be avenged. However, if the stricken servant remains alive for a day or two, then he will not be avenged, because he is his property. Literally, "remains standing." For "property," the literal word is silver.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	' And if a man strikes his slave, or his maid-servant, with his stick and he dies under his hand, they shall be avenged. Yet if these continue a day, or some days, they shall not be avenged, for they were his property.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
HCSB	<p>"When a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod, and the slave dies under his abuse,<sup>[j]</sup> the owner must be punished.<sup>[j]</sup> However, if the slave can stand up after a day or two, the owner should not be punished<sup>[k]</sup> because he is his owner's property.<sup>[j]</sup></p> <p>i. Exodus 21:20 Lit <i>hand</i>  j. Exodus 21:20 Or <i>must suffer vengeance</i>  k. Exodus 21:21 Or <i>not suffer vengeance</i>  l. Exodus 21:21 Lit <i>money</i></p>
International Standard V	<p>"If a man strikes his male or female servant with a stick and he or she dies as a direct result,<sup>q</sup> the master must be punished.<sup>r</sup> But if the servants survives a day or two, the master<sup>t</sup> is not to be punished because the servant<sup>u</sup> is his property.</p> <p><b>q</b> 21:20 Lit. under his hand  <b>r</b> 21:20 Lit. suffer vengeance  <b>s</b> 21:21 Lit. he  <b>t</b> 21:21 Lit. he  <b>u</b> 21:21 Lit. he</p>
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"Anyone who beats their male or female slave with a rod must be punished if the slave dies as a direct result, but they are not to be punished if the slave recovers after a day or two, since the slave is their property.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	If a man hits his male servant or his female servant with a staff, and if the servant dies as a result of the blow, then that man must surely be punished. However, if the servant lives for a day or two, the master must not be punished, for he will have suffered the loss of the servant.

Urim-Thummim Version	If a man strikes his slave or his female slave with a club, and he dies by his hand, he will certainly be punished. Notwithstanding, if the slave recovers in a day or two he will not be punished, for he is his property.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And which man will strike his slave-man or slave-woman with a rod, and he died under his hand, upon him will vengeance be avenged. But if he will stand in a day or two, he will not be avenged, because he is his property.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And if a man strikes his manservant or his maidservant, with a rod, and he dies under his hand, he, being punished, shall be punished. Only, if he stands a day or days, he shall not be punished, because he is his silver.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	When someone strikes his male or female slave with a rod so that the slave dies under his hand, the act shall certainly be avenged. If, however, the slave survives for a day or two, he is not to be punished, since the slave is his own property.
New English Bible—1970	When a man strikes his slave or his slave-girl with a stick and the slave dies on the spot, he must be punished. But he shall not be punished if the slave survives for one day or two, because he is worth money to his master.
New Jerusalem Bible	'If someone beats his slave, male or female, and the slave dies at his hands, he must pay the penalty. But should the slave survive for one or two days, he will pay no penalty because the slave is his by right of purchase.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	(ii) "If a person beats his male or female slave with a stick so severely that he dies, he is to be punished; except that if the slave lives for a day or two, he is not to be punished, since the slave is his property.
exeGesés companion Bible	And if a man smites his servant, or his maid, with a scion, and he dies under his hand, in avenging, avenge him. Only, if he stays two days, he is not avenged: for he is his silver.
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And when a man smites his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall certainly be punished. "But if he remains alive a day or two, he is not punished; for he is his property.
Tree of Life Version	.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Awful Scroll Bible	Was a man to strike his man servant or maidservant with a staff, even is to have died by his hand, as to avenge he was to be avenged. But was he to stand up, within a day or two - was he to be avenged? - He is his silver.
Charles Thomson OT	.

Concordant Literal Version	When a man smites his servant or his maidservant with a club and he dies under his hand, he shall be avenged, yea avenged;" only if he stands a day or two days he shall not be avenged, for he is his silver. "
Darby Translation	And if a man strike his bondman or his handmaid with a staff, and he die under his hand, he shall certainly be avenged. Only, if he continue <i>to live</i> a day or two days, he shall not be avenged; for he is his money.
exeGeses companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if an ish strikes his eved, or his amah, with a shevet (rod), and he die under his yad; he shall be surely avenged. Notwithstanding, if he continue a yom or two, he shall not be avenged; for he is his kesef.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"If a man strikes his male or his female servant with a staff and the servant dies at his hand, he must be punished. If, however, the servant survives for a day or two, the offender shall not be punished, for the [injured] servant is his own property.
The Expanded Bible	"If a man ·beats [strikes] his male or female slave with a ·stick [rod], and the slave dies on the spot, the owner must be punished. But if the slave gets well after a day or two, the owner will not be punished since the slave belongs to him.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And if a man smite his servant or his maid, his male or his female slave, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished, be required to give satisfaction. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two before dying, and it be shown in this way that it was not the master's intention to commit murder outright, he shall not be punished; for he is his money, the slave was the master's property, and in such a case it would not stand to reason that he had deliberately and purposely killed the slave. The law was intended to prevent ruthless exhibitions of temper and cold-blooded murders.
Syndein/Thieme	{Murder of a Slave is Not a Capital Offense} And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a staff/rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. {Note: If a master kills his slave, then the master will be punished monetarily, but God does not consider this 1st degree murder.} Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his 'money'.
The Voice	If a person hits his male or female slave with a rod, and the slave dies because of the blow, then that person must be punished. But if the slave survives a couple of days, then there will be no penalty because the slave belongs to the master.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach	And should a man strike his manservant or his maidservant with a rod, and [that one] die under his hand, he shall surely be avenged.
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**And should a man strike his manservant or his maidservant:** The text is referring to a Canaanite slave, or perhaps it is referring only to a Hebrew [slave]? To clarify this, the Torah says: "because he is his property" (verse 21). Just as his property is his permanent acquisition, so is the slave [in question] one who is his permanent acquisition. Now, was he [the one who kills his slave] not included in "He who strikes a man and he dies" (above, verse 12) ? This verse was written [lit., came] to exclude him [the owner of the slave] from the general rule [concerning murder], to be judged with the law of "a day or two days" (verse 21), that if he did not die under his hand but lingered an entire twenty-four-hour period, he is exempt. -[From Mechilta]

**with a rod:** The verse refers to [a rod] that has sufficient [weight and strength] to kill [someone]. Or perhaps that is not so, but [the master is liable] even if it [the rod] does not have sufficient [weight and strength] to kill? Therefore, the Torah says concerning an Israelite: “Or if he strikes him with a stone that can be held in the hand, from which he may die” (Num. 35:17). (“Or if he strikes him with a wooden instrument that can be held in the hand, from which he may die” ) (Num. 35:18). -[Mizrachi version] Now could the matter not be understood by a kal vachomer [an inference from a major to a minor case], that if [in the case of] an Israelite [victim], [a case] which is treated more stringently, one is not liable unless he struck him [the victim] with an article that has sufficient [weight and strength] to kill and the blow is on an organ which could cause death, how much more should it be so [in the case of] a slave, [a case] which is treated more leniently? -[From Mechilta]

**he shall surely be avenged:** [with] death by the sword [decapitation], and so does the Torah say: “a sword avenging the vengeance of the covenant” (Lev. 26:25). -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 52b]

But if he survives for a day or for two days, he shall not be avenged, because he is his property.

**But if he survives for a day or two he shall not be avenged:** If one day[’s survival] exempts him [from punishment], then would not [survival of] two days be even more obvious? [Why then, is the word מִיָּמָיו written?] Rather [it must be that we are speaking of] one day which is as two days, and what [kind of day] is that? A full, twenty-four hour period.

**he shall not be avenged, because he is his property:** But if someone else struck him, even if he lingered for twenty-four hours before he died, he [the other person] is liable [to incur the death penalty].

Kaplan Translation

#### *Killing of Slaves*

If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod, and [the slave] dies under his hand, [the death] must be avenged. However, if [the slave] survives for a day or two, then, since he is [his master's] property, [his death] shall not be avenged.

#### **slave**

A gentile bought as a slave (Mekhilta; Rashi).

#### **avenged**

Implying a death penalty for the master (Sanhedrin 52b; Rashi).

NET Bible®

“If a man strikes his male servant or his female servant with a staff so that he or she<sup>45</sup> dies as a result of the blow,<sup>46</sup> he will surely be punished.<sup>47</sup> However, if the injured servant<sup>48</sup> survives one or two days, the owner<sup>49</sup> will not be punished, for he has suffered the loss.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup>tn Heb “so that he”; the words “or she” have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>46</sup>tn Heb “under his hand.”

<sup>47</sup>tn Heb “will be avenged” (how is not specified).

<sup>48</sup>tn Heb “if he”; the referent (the servant struck and injured in the previous verse) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>49</sup>tn Heb “he”; the referent (the owner of the injured servant) has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>50</sup>tn This last clause is a free paraphrase of the Hebrew, “for he is his money” (so KJV, ASV); NASB “his property.” It seems that if the slave survives a couple of days, it is probable that the master was punishing him and not intending to kill him. If he then dies, there is no penalty other than that the owner loses the slave who is his property – he suffers the loss.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and (if) a man hits his servant or his bondwoman (with) the branch, and he dies (by) his hand, he will :surely: be avenged, (however), if he will stand for a day or two days, he will not be avenged, given that he is his silver,...
Charles Thomson OT	If a man smite his man servant or his maid servant with a staff; and the servant die under his hand, vengeance shall be taken by a judicial process; but if the servant live a day or two, let no vengeance be taken, for he is his money.
C. Thompson (updated) OT	.
Context Group Version	.
English Standard Version	"When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged. But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	"And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, vengeance shall be taken to avenge. Nevertheless, if he continues a day or two, vengeance shall not be taken; for he is part of his assets.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	`And when a man smiteth his man-servant or his handmaid, with a rod, and he hath died under his hand--he is certainly avenged; only if he remain a day, or two days, he is not avenged, for he is his money.

**The gist of this passage:**  
20-21

### Exodus 21:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645



## Exodus 21:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĠE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
ʾôw (וּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
ʾâmâh (אֲמָה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #519 BDB #51
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêbeṭ (שֵׁבֶט) [pronounced SHAY <sup>B</sup> -vet]	<i>rod, staff, club; spear; scepter and figuratively for a tribe, subdivision of a tribe or family and for a ruler (scepter-bearer), governor</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7626 BDB #986

**Translation:** When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod,...

We are looking at actions only here and not giving any consideration to motivation. A master strikes his servant or his maid with a rod. No assumption is made here about whether this was deserved or not; or whether the master has overreacted.

There appears to be an assumption here in this passage as to the sort of servant we are speaking of. Servitude of a fellow Hebrew is temporary—6 years. Yet, at the end of this passage, this speaks of the servant as *his property*. This is understood by some to, therefore, exclude Hebrew slaves from those listed. I believe that is an attempt to draw too fine a point on this passage.

## Exodus 21:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Exodus 21:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH- khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control; responsibility</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...and he [or she] dies under his hand,...

Now, suppose that the servant dies. In many societies, that would be the end of this matter. It would be like burning money in your backyard; it might intrigue your neighbors, but no one is going to be concerned with the morality of such an action (as an aside, I think this is a crime, however). My point here is, in most ancient societies, a slave is simply property owned by the master. There is no consideration for that life or death of that property. God, on the other hand, treats that slave in a different way.

## Exodus 21:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâqam (נָקַם) [pronounced <i>naw- KAHM</i> ]	<i>to avenge, to take vengeance; to harbor vengeful feelings; to punish</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #5358 BDB #667
nâqam (נָקַם) [pronounced <i>naw- KAHM</i> ]	<i>to avenge, to take vengeance, to avenge [onself]; to be avenged; to be punished, to receive punishment</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5358 BDB #667

**Translation:** ...he will certainly be punished.

There would be a sure punishment to follow. The context does not specify the punishment (so often, punishment in the ancient Hebrew society is death). I believe that this would be open to the adjudication of a court and whatever judge they stood before.

Let me suggest that, at this point, motivation and the series of actions leading to the point of this assault, would all become pertinent to the final court decision. So, theoretically, this court case could result in the death penalty; and it could result in some sort of payment as well (to the slave's family or relatives?).

Later on, we will come across the phrase, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life*. What this means is, the judge rendering judgment will try to find punishment that is appropriate. This does not mean, if you knock

out Charley's Brown's tooth then your tooth must then be knocked out. Punishment should be appropriate and equivalent. It does not have to be the exact same thing.

So, it would be up to the judge to assess the proper punishment.

The other view of this matter—and I am beginning to lean in that direction—the penalty describe in context for the intentional killing of another is death. This is the traditional view of the rabbis. The counter argument here is, *death is not specifically prescribed*, even though we find that punishment specified in vv. 12, 16, and 17.

The doubling of the verb indicates that this is not a slap on the wrist or a warning, but a severe punishment. Again, this would suggest execution.

Exodus 21:20 **When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We have a distorted view of slavery in the United States, because it has been such a political issue. Since the slaves that were in the United States were brought here against their will, sold by their own brothers, so to speak; and since there were aspects of this sort of slavery which were deplorable, we lose track of what slavery was in ancient times. At the very worst we have men who are kidnaped and sold into slavery (as alluded to in v. 16); however we also have men who were placed into slavery because they were defeated in battle and we also have men who willingly sold themselves into slavery. Hebrews, if you will recall, were to remain slaves for only six years and released during the Sabbath year. This is not unlike being a journeyman or under the tutelage of another or voluntarily working for someone for seven years. There is not a lot of difference here, except that the master would guarantee the basics of food, clothing and shelter. Those things are not guaranteed if one is an intern; or if one has a low-level job in a free society.

This verse ends with a doubling of the verb *nâqam* (נָקַם) [pronounced *naw-KAHM*]. *Nâqam* means *to avenge, to take vengeance*. first in the Qal infinitive absolute and then in the Niphal imperfect. We find the Niphal imperfect of this verb in Judges 16:28 Isaiah 1:24 Ezekiel 25:15. It means *in vengeance, he will be avenged*. Certain punishment is required. This may not sound very enlightened, but when you realize that in the ancient world a slave was considered simply property, no more and no less, this elevated their position considerably. This applied to Israel's worst enemies who have been defeated in battle when their survivors placed into slavery. The law actually gave them some protections.

From Wikipedia regarding slavery in the United States: *Slave codes regulated how slaves could be punished, usually going so far as to apply no penalty for accidentally killing a slave while punishing them. Later laws began to apply restrictions on this, but slave-owners were still rarely punished for killing their slaves.*<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, we read: *Historian Lawrence M. Friedman wrote: "Ten Southern codes made it a crime to mistreat a slave.... Under the Louisiana Civil Code of 1825 (art. 192), if a master was convicted of cruel treatment, the judge could order the sale of the mistreated slave, presumably to a better master."*<sup>29</sup> These are very different histories being recorded.

If you have an interest in this realm, you have no doubt read that the laws of the Hebrew people were simply copied from previous law codes. This is patently untrue, which can be illustrated by...

## Ancient Slavery Codes

### Sumer

The Code of Ur-Nammu, the oldest known surviving law code, written c. 2100 – 2050 BCE, includes laws relating to slaves during the Third Dynasty of Ur in Sumerian Mesopotamia. It states that a slave that marries cannot be forced to leave the household, and that the bounty for returning a slave who has escaped the city

<sup>28</sup> From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave\\_codes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave_codes) accessed December 4, 2024.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

## Ancient Slavery Codes

is two shekels. It reveals that there were at least two major social strata at the time: those free, and those enslaved.

### Babylon

The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, written between 1755–1750 BC, also distinguishes between the free and the enslaved. Like the Code of Ur-Nammu, it offers a reward of two shekels for returning a fugitive slave, but unlike the other code, states that harbouring or assisting a fugitive was punishable by death. Slaves were either purchased abroad, taken as prisoners in war, or enslaved as a punishment for being in debt or committing a crime. The Code of Hammurabi states that if a slave is purchased and within one month develops epilepsy ("benu-disease") then the purchaser can return the slave and receive a full refund. The code has laws relating to the purchase of slaves abroad. Numerous contracts for the sale of slaves survive. The final law in the Code of Hammurabi states that if a slave denies his master, then his ear will be cut off.

### Hittites

Hittite texts from Anatolia include laws regulating the institution of slavery. Of particular interest is a law stipulating that reward for the capture of an escaped slave would be higher if the slave had already succeeded in crossing the Halys River and getting farther away from the center of Hittite civilization — from which it can be concluded that at least some of the slaves kept by the Hittites possessed a realistic chance of escaping and regaining their freedom, possibly by finding refuge with other kingdoms or ethnic groups.

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery\\_in\\_antiquity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_antiquity) accessed December 4, 2024.

The passage which we have been studying is this:

Exodus 21:20 *When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God did not expect slaves to be manumitted nor did He expect the Hebrew people to suddenly abolish slavery; however, slaves were to be treated fairly and with compassion as fellow human beings. We are all born into a status or fall into a particular social position and it is not our Christian duty or anyone else's to remove us from this status and place us in another. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor, slave or free. God's plan is not a change in social status, although that may occur as some people are blessed with material prosperity. God's plan for us is first salvation and then spiritual growth. Those who fall into God's plan come from all social strata, all levels of ability, in all shapes and sizes. We are not born alike and believing in Jesus Christ does not automatically change us into cookie cutter Christians. What God does intend here in verses like these is to preserve the basic rights and volition of slaves so that they might believe in Jesus Christ (or, in the Old Testament, Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim).

## Exodus 21:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ak <sup>e</sup> (אֶךְ) [pronounced ahk <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>surely, truly, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, only this once; nothing but</i>	adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle	Strong's #389 BDB #36

## Exodus 21:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
Not sure if these have a combined meaning.			
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʾow (אוּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
yôwmayim (יוֹמַיִם) [pronounced yow-MAW-yihm]	<i>two days, a pair of days</i>	masculine dual noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʾamad (עָמַד) [pronounced gaw-MAHD]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763

**Translation:** But if [the servant] stands in a day or two,...

V. 21 requires a little Hebrew; not necessarily to understand it, but to understand the translations that you read. It begins with an adverb and a hypothetical particle, meaning *only if* or *notwithstanding, if*, and we would have a better grasp if it is rendered *if, however*. The next phrase is literally *a day or two days* or *a day and two days* (the word *day* is used twice; once in the singular and once in the dual). This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine singular, Qal imperfect of ʾamad (עָמַד) [pronounced gaw-MAHD] and it means *stand, to take a stand, to stand up*; in this context it means *to recover*.

On the other hand, let's say that the injured slave is back on his feet in a day or two. So, he sustained an injury that might be serious, but he did not die.

Some of the translations at this point were substandard. Several of them have, *and the slave is still alive after a day or two* (or words to that effect). This allows for a severe beating, but after a day or so, the servant is back on his feet working.

## Exodus 21:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

## Exodus 21:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâqam (נָקַם) [pronounced naw-KAHM]	<i>to take vengeance [for blood], vengeance being taken, to be avenged; to be punished</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #5358 BDB #667
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
keṣeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]	<i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>	masculine singular noun; with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3701 BDB #494
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** ...the master [lit., he] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., he] [is] his silver.

We have the word *punish* again, but this time in the very rare stem the Hophal, which is the stem of compulsion. However, it carries with it the negative. The action of the verb is active and the object of the verb is passive. So, normally he would receive punishment, but the negative reverses that.

The master who punished the slave—again, the exact situation is not considered—that master will not be punished, the reason being is, the slave is his money; the slave belongs to him. When he harms one of his servants, and that servant is out of commission, that man loses the productiveness of that slave.

Exodus 21:21 But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., he] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., he] [is] his silver. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The slave works for the master. When the master is foolish enough to strike his slave out of anger such that his slave is incapacitated for a few days, it is the master who loses money. The slave takes care of certain responsibilities and a slave generally is not superfluous in a household. Most Hebrews did not own slaves and those who did, did not have a superabundance of them (particularly during the time that the Law was given to them). So when they caused their own slave to be out of commission for awhile, they paid through the lack of work which the slave normally would have accomplished. The expression *the slave is his money* is similar to expressions that we have today: *time is money, that's money down the drain*. Although the Bible is to be taken literally, there are simple phrases as this one which are obviously more literary than literal.

Exodus 21:20–21 When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished. But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., he] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., he] [is] his silver. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

One must bear in mind that a slave was not cheap to purchase, relatively speaking. Therefore, owners needed to be circumspect concerning their treatment of slaves. The law is given here as some protection to the slaves, indicating that the control by the master is not absolute—that is, there are limitations.

After all, a slave is a human being—the Bible never suggests any less—and the owner did not want to make life so horrible that, the slave run off or the slave rebel against his master. These laws protected the slaves and they also protected masters from going too far as well.



Very often, these laws are striking a balance between the rights and duties of all parties involved, with a clear acknowledgment of cultural norms and standards. Bluntly speaking, the slave is the property of the master; but that does not give the master carte blanc in any behavior directed toward the slave. That is, the master cannot do whatever he wants to do to the slave. There are legal consequences when the master goes too far.

No doubt, some people would object to this paragraph, but it should be clear that, there are rights being conferred in this passage which were not necessarily understood in other ancient societies.

Exodus 21:20–21 **Let's say a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and that servant dies from the blow, the master will certainly be punished. However, if the servant recovers in a day or two, then the master will not be punished, for the slave is his valuable property.** (Kukis paraphrase)

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Introduction to vv. 22–25:

V. 22 is a moderately difficult verse to interpret, being quoted by both anti-abortionists and pro-choice advocates who believe in the Bible. Many people will try to twist the Scripture to justify whatever it is that they believe in or whatever it is that they have done in the past. There are those who are truly born again who were once draft-dodging hippies. Such people sometimes have an ideology so deep in their souls that they will approach the Bible with the assumption that we are to be totally nonviolent under any circumstance and that we are not to kill under any circumstance. Or they may have long hair or they may be homosexual and will twist clear Scripture around to support their personal sins, short comings or past mistakes. This is a grave error.

If you are wrong, be a man then admit it and move on. Life is too short to spend all of it out of fellowship because you are either too stupid or too hard-headed to hear and believe simple **Bible doctrine**. You will waste most of your **Christian life** stuck in neutral because you will not progress beyond a prejudice or two that you have carried over from your old life. By definition, many of our moral values as unbelievers are wrong. Every new believer walks into the spiritual life with some wrong ideas. That is not a big deal. That is true of everyone. It does not matter whether or not you like what the clear teaching of Scripture is, the best approach is to believe it and live with it. I come across things myself which do not fit in with the way I was raised or the beliefs which I once held. That is not the end of the world. We simply readjust our minds to the Word of God.

Before we move forward, I want to remind you that these are the laws given to Israel for a particular period of time (1450 B.C. to A.D. 70). These laws were not given to other nations; nor is it our Christian duty to try to put all of these laws on the books in our own country or state. Israel was a theocracy, but gentile nations are not to be theocracies because God is not directly interacting with any gentile nation as He did with Israel. We are studying what was right and wrong (lawful or unlawful) for Israel during this period of time. At no time does Paul write to a church and tell them: *Listen, these laws about slavery are superb and you need to push these forward for client nation Rome.*

Therefore, in our study, we learn what laws Israel was under at one time and we develop a concept of right and wrong based upon this study. When writing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, our forefathers consulted the Bible more than any other book available to them. This was the right thing for them to do. However, the structure of our government was not a clone of Israel's nor should it have been. There is no mandate in Scripture for us to duplicate nation Israel in our own established government. However, the Bible is certain the right book for guidance when establishing a new nation (as ours was established in 1776).

When a person first believes in Jesus Christ, they begin at that point without **scar tissue**; which means, you can walk away from drug addiction, from alcoholism, from homosexual addiction, etc. Therefore, if you so choose, at the moment of salvation, those things are gone from your life. You won't need to attend meetings, talk with others who suffered from the same problems of addiction, or reveal your worst secrets to 10 or 20 other strangers. At salvation, you may drop any habit that you have built up throughout the years.

There are so many people who have believed in Christ and simply stopped drinking or doing drugs cold turkey. Some of them believe that they have really accomplished something great, but this is the result of what God has done for us. God resets our factory settings, so to speak, at our second birth.

Now, if you choose to go right back to those activities, you can build up scar tissue quickly, and find yourself, experientially, right where you were before. Hooked on drugs, on alcohol, on various sexual addictions, etc. However, the new believer has the opportunity to walk away from all of his old habits. All of them.

This is not repeated in the life of the believer. That is, you cannot come to some great emotional point in your life and rededicate your life to Christ, and start anew. Now, for some people, this can be an important step, but it does not erase the scar tissue that you have built up. The elimination of scar tissue happens only once in the believer's life.

Now, if you have believed in Jesus Christ and you have decided not to set aside your former sinful lifestyle, that is your choice. However, the big difference is, now you are a child of God and subject to God's discipline (as an unbeliever, you were not).

In translating and interpreting this passage, I should make my prejudice clear from the outset. I have never approved of abortion as retroactive birth control. There is something about that kind of a choice which makes me grimace. There are a great many people who believe that abortion under any circumstance is wrong and a great many others who feel even if they are married and love their husbands, if a pregnancy is inconvenient, then they should be able to terminate it without a tinge of guilt because they try to see the fetus as nothing more than a growth of the woman's body, not unlike a toenail. Deep inside, they know this is incorrect, but even though it is a very difficult decision for most women, too many chose to err on the side of convenience.

Interestingly enough, this same freedom afforded the woman by abortion supporters do not believe that this same freedom of choice should be allowed the man. That is, if a man marries, fathers children, and then decides that these things are inconvenient to his life and to his personal development, there does not seem to be a widespread support for him to just pick up and abandon his wife and children in order to start working on his own life or to pursue his own dreams.

I have heard both sides of the abortion issue and have read several compelling books from each side. Generally speaking when it comes to a person choosing to have an abortion, it is generally the case of one mistake being followed by another followed by another. Let's take this in points:

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1. There are many clear details which the Bible leaves out that we might suppose to be important: the best form of local and national government; the ideal hierarchy and structure of a church; appropriate punishments for breaking such laws as the one previously named in v. 20 of this chapter.
2. I am coming to the opinion that the Bible does not specify certain things because there is not a true preference. For instance, there have been client nations to God which were ruled by God, which have been ruled over by dictators (Israel under its kings), which have been ruled by other nations (Judæa under the control of Rome), which were run by a Parliament (Great Britain), and one which is a constitutional republic (the United States). When freedom was given a people, God is able to broadcast His Word throughout the land. The form of government in power is inconsequential. In fact, even the persons in power can be inconsequential. This does not mean that God is not concerned about the leadership of a client nation; it just means that a client nation can function even with poor leadership.
3. I am leaning toward the same opinion concerning the running of a church. At one time in my life I was convinced that it was an absolute monarchy of one and I have since become comfortable with a Bible believing church having more than one pastor or having an assistant pastor, etc. A couple pastors may rotate in and out. I don't believe any particular church government was set up in Scripture, as there are a number of structures which work. However, for the most part, the one teaching the Word of God has the authority in the church. This does not mean that the examples I have given of church leadership

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would not be fraught with their own problems.

4. God is able to deal with future problems even in the context of previous cultures. Whereas, there was no abortion issue in Biblical times, if God has a preference, then He will make that preference clear.
5. When it comes to the moment of soul life (also known as, ensoulment), I tend to side with R.B. Thieme, Jr. that true human life begins when the infant fresh from the womb yelps and takes in that first gulp of air. It is at that point that God the Holy Spirit breathes into this child the breath of lives. It does not matter if this is the midst of an abortion procedure and the fetus has been taken outside of the womb by whatever means and if he takes a breath of air, for an instant, he is a real and true person, the son of his parents. Whoever kills him at that point is clearly a murderer. When I originally wrote this doctrine, it would have never occurred to me that killing a child after an abortion would actually become a legitimate act in the eyes of many. However, there have been a number of abortions gone wrong (meaning that the infant is born alive), and the living infant is then killed (many times forced to starve to death apart from any help from the adults who are there).
6. On the other hand, there are medical means applied very early in the pregnancy which terminate the pregnancy. The Catholic church has some sort of teaching concerning the abortion issue and split the life of the unborn child into three trimesters where the abortion for certain reasons is allowed during the first so many days, but not afterwards. However, having the ability to do something like this does not make it right, moral or lawful.
7. Finally, it would seem to me that if it were our duty as Christians to picket, bomb, harass, etc. abortion clinics and their employees, that the Bible would have been much clearer in this directive. You see, these things (other than the picketing) are unlawful and even Paul, who was later imprisoned by an unjust government, nevertheless urged us to obey all authorities and laws (Romans 13). Paul did not organize nearby churches to protest on his behalf (although he certainly did whatever was legal in order to regain his own freedom).
8. The only time we are ever told to disregard the law is by Peter ("We ought to obey God rather than man") when it came to matters of evangelism and Bible teaching. We are to evangelize even if such activity has been outlawed (in the United States, as this time, this is not an issue to us; in some countries, it is).
9. Now let's approach the two opposing positions from a logical viewpoint. An atheist does not believe that God exists. A Deist believes that God exists, but that He created the world, and then walked away from it and has no direct involvement in it anymore. For these types of people, human life is all there is. God does not come down at any point in time and have any contact with man (in these two views). Therefore, it would be illogical for them to believe that life does not begin until birth. The soonest life could begin would be at conception and the latest would be when there are electrical impulses in the brain of the fetus (which occurs sometime within the first 6–8 weeks). Therefore, logically for the atheist or for the theist, they should oppose abortion as murder anytime after the first trimester and probably anytime after the first 6 weeks. On the other hand, if the born-again Christian sees God imparting life to Adam by breathing the breath of lives into his soul as a precedent, then logically we would be born soulishly at birth when we take in our first gulp of air. This person would be, logically speaking, more cavalier about abortion. When someone is unsure or an agnostic, then on which side should they err? They are possibly murdering a baby and possibly they are not. With this indecision, which choice is the most logical to make, particularly for the person who considers himself a humanist? Interestingly enough, it is the Christian who may appear to have the most latitude in the realm of abortion, from the standpoint of logic and beliefs.
10. Let me be even more direct. Let's say you are a Christian woman and you find yourself pregnant—married or not. Then you need to ask yourself, *did God have anything to do with this pregnancy? Was it His will for you to be pregnant?* I think that it is pretty clear what God's will is in this situation. Therefore, it should be an easy determination as to what God expects you to do. You bear the child. Let's say you are a Christian woman who has been raped. Again, was this God's will for your life? Obviously, yes. What happens to us does not happen to us by accident. I know of one public speaker on teen pregnancy and premarital sex whose father raped her birth mother. Her mother bore her and gave her up for adoption. This woman has been a blessing to the lives of tens of thousands of people throughout the world. Her birth-mother did not automatically assume, because she was a victim of rape, that her unborn child was without worth and not a part of the plan of God. Understanding that there was

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11. value in the life of her child, even though it (she) was the product of rape, was the correct understanding. Finally, I have heard a whole host of verses such as John the Baptist turning in the womb—this is simple fetal movement, which all mothers experience. Others quote verses where God has known someone from the womb—God has known us from eternity past. This is a way of saying before we have done anything, God knew us.
12. Quite obviously, there is more to say about this issue.

For more information on these points, see **the Doctrine of Abortion** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).

[Chapter Outline](#)

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In case you wonder, are any of these laws actually relevant to me? This next passage is one of the most debated passages in the Law of Moses, which absolutely has application to this point in time. This passage has been used to oppose abortion, to support abortion, and to support the idea of revenge (when we take in the final verses).

Now, let me be specific here, and I try to avoid pointing to a specific theologian or pastor when I can. I prefer to deal with principles and not personalities. However, I will mention R. B. Thieme, Jr., as his position on this matter has been made quite clear, and it is under him where I have experienced the bulk of my theological training.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. teaches that ensoulment does not occur until after a child is born, and God breathes life into that child (ensoulment is the impartation of a human soul to the body; it is ensoulment which makes us fully human). He quotes this passage (among others) to support his application of ensoulment occurring after taking a breath.

I certainly agree with R. B. Thieme, Jr. and many others who believe ensoulment to occur at the moment a child takes his first breath (which is a very common theological position taken by Jewish and Christian theologians alike). However, where I depart from Bob is in the application of this. Since there is no soul, Bob (and others) teach that abortion can be simply the decision of the woman and her doctor (so many times the doctor is thrown in there as if he is an equal participant in this decision, but if the woman insists, will a doctor really say, “No, you are wrong”? My point being, abortion is the decision of the woman; it is almost never a joint decision of a woman and her doctor.<sup>30</sup>)

Let me give a few principles. Theologically, even though the fetus in the womb lacks a soul, this does not give us carte blanc to end of the life of the fetus. Secondly, in a secular society, we cannot make up laws based upon theological positions. In other words, the point when we receive a soul is irrelevant to secular law. Thirdly, even though a fetus lacks soul-life, this does not mean that God has no concern for the future life of that child. God, more than anyone else, knows the potential future of every child in the womb, something which is expressed in the Bible on many occasions.

When considering all of these things, we must bear in mind that science views the fetus in the womb as a separate person from the mother. The fetus has a unique human design (although identical twins are not an exception to this, they come pretty close to being an exception); there will be no person exactly like any fetus in the womb when born. From conception, the unborn child is a unique creation of God (God designed and made all of the factors necessary in order for us to conceive and have children).

The fetus is dependent upon the mother for life; but the fetus is not some appendage of the mother, like a wart, a cyst or a gall bladder. The child in the womb is unique and biologically alive. There is not a biologist in the world who would argue against that.

<sup>30</sup> An exception to this is, the doctor may provide the woman with his medical opinion as to the condition of the fetus in the uterus. What he says can hold enormous sway over a woman or over a pair of parents. But, like rape and incest, this is a small percentage of pregnancies.

In a secular society, we should not be making laws based entirely upon a theological position. Furthermore, in a secular society, we should not treat human life indifferently simply because it is inconvenient (which is far and away the #1 reason for abortions). Nearly every aborted child is birth control after the fact.

In any case, despite our own thinking on this topic, I believe that I will reveal logically from the Hebrew what is being said in this passage, which will yield us a logical outcome and reasonable application, no matter when ensoulment takes place. That is, if we correctly understand the passage before us, then that will give us the answer that we need, as to whether abortion is morally right or not.

Quite obviously, we must always pay attention to context, word meaning, the construction of the Hebrew sentences, and then be careful about the application. A football player may catch a pass, run out of bounds, and then run an additional 20 yards; but the moment he steps out of bounds, that is the end of the play, no matter what he does after that. We want to be careful not to carry the ball an additional 20 yards out of bounds when it comes to interpreting the passage before us.

There will be a struggle between two men, and a pregnant woman is harmed in the process. There will be two basic outcomes: no harm or harm. V. 22 covers the premise and the result of no serious harm occurring. V. 23–25 will cover the outcome of harm being the result of this scuffle. I combined all of these verses in a couple of places, as it all describes the same incident, but with different outcomes.

I mention all of these things at the beginning because I have heard this passage quoted as the clincher for both sides of the abortion controversy. I believe that I have reasonably laid out the controversy of abortion.

Now let's look at this passage:

<p><b>And when struggle men and strike a woman with child and has gone out her children, and [there] is no harm, fining, he will be fined, as which sets upon him an owner of the woman and gives as [the] judges [determine].</b></p>	<p>Exodus 21:22</p>	<p><b>And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, <i>she gives birth prematurely</i>], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines; and he will pay [lit., <i>give</i>] as the judges [determine].</b></p>
<p><b>Let's say that there are two men who are fighting, and one smashes into a pregnant woman standing nearby so that she gives birth prematurely. If there is no harm or injury that results, then the man who harmed the woman will be fined. The husband will suggest an amount and the judges may modify his demands.</b></p>		

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	<p>And when struggle men and strike a woman with child and has gone out her children, and [there] is no harm, fining, he will be fined, as which sets upon him an owner of the woman and gives as [the] judges [determine].</p>
<p>Dead Sea Scrolls Jerusalem targum Targum (Onkelos)</p>	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>If men contending strike a woman with child and she miscarry, but die not, fined he shall be fined, as the husband of the woman may set upon him, and he shall give according to the sentence of judgment.</p>
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	<p>If men when striving strike a woman with child, and cause her to miscarry, but not to lose her life, the fine on account of the infant which the husband of the woman shall lay upon him, he shall pay according to the sentence of the judges.</p>



Revised Douay-Rheims	If men quarrel, and one strike a woman with child, and she miscarry indeed, but live herself: he shall be answerable for so much damage as the woman's husband shall require, and as arbiters shall award.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If men fight and hurt a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely, and yet no harm follows, he shall be surely fined as much as the woman's husband demands and the judges allow.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	If two men quarrel, and strike a woman with child so that she miscarries, and yet no mischief follow; he shall surely pay a fine such as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if two men strive and smite a woman with child, and her child be born imperfectly formed, he shall be forced to pay a penalty: as the woman's husband may lay upon him, he shall pay with a valuation.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If men, while fighting, do damage to a woman with child, causing the loss of the child, but no other evil comes to her, the man will have to make payment up to the amount fixed by her husband, in agreement with the decision of the judges.
Easy English	When two men fight together, perhaps one man may hit a woman. That woman may be with child. Then she gives birth to her child before the right time. If the cruel man has not hurt the child, he must pay money to her husband. He must pay the amount of money that the husband asks. A judge must agree that the amount is fair.
God's Word™	"This is what you must do whenever men fight and injure a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely. If there are no other injuries, the offender must pay whatever fine the court allows the woman's husband to demand.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"If some men are fighting and hurt a pregnant woman so that she loses her child, but she is not injured in any other way, the one who hurt her is to be fined whatever amount the woman's husband demands, subject to the approval of the judges. But if the woman herself is injured, the punishment shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. Vv. 23–25 are included for context.
The Message	"When there's a fight and in the fight a pregnant woman is hit so that she miscarries but is not otherwise hurt, the one responsible has to pay whatever the husband demands in compensation.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. "Suppose some people are fighting and one of them hits a pregnant woman. And suppose she has her baby early but is not badly hurt. Then the one who hurt her must pay a fine. That person must pay what the woman's husband asks for and the court allows.
New Simplified Bible	»When a pregnant woman suffers a miscarriage as the result of an injury caused by someone who is fighting, if she is not badly hurt, the one who injured her must pay whatever fine her husband demands and the judges approve.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.



Contemporary English V.	Suppose a pregnant woman suffers a miscarriage as the result of an injury caused by someone who is fighting. If she isn't badly hurt, the one who injured her must pay whatever fine her husband demands and the judges approve.
New Berkeley Version New Living Translation	. “Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely. [Hebrew reads <i>so her children come out</i> ] If no further injury results, the man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman's husband demands and the judges approve.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	If two people are fighting and they hurt a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but the woman is not harmed in any other way, the one who hurt her must pay a fine. He must pay whatever the woman's husband asks after a judge approves of the fine.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	‘If two men are fighting and [one] hits a pregnant woman and her child is born deformed as the result; he must be forced to pay whatever amount her man demands of him.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	.
Translation for Translators	Suppose two people are fighting and they hurt a pregnant woman with the result that «she has a miscarriage/her baby is born prematurely and dies». If the woman is not harmed in any other way, the one who injured her must pay a fine. He must pay whatever the woman's husband demands, after a judge approves of the fine.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If men fight with one another, and in the process injure a pregnant woman and cause her to miscarry, but no further mishap follows, then the man doing the injury will pay whatever fine the husband demands and the mediators allow.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	‘And when two persons quarrel, and they strike a pregnant woman, and her child comes out, and mischief does not ensue; he shall be fined, according to what is laid upon him to compensate the woman, and that shall be fixed by the judges.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	When men strive and smite a woman with child so that her fruit depart from her and yet no misfortune follows: then shall he be merced ( <i>merchandised or mercies</i> ), according as the womans husband will lay to his charge, and he shall pay as the daysmen appoint him.
HCSB	“When men get in a fight and hit a pregnant woman so that her children are born prematurely [Either a live birth or a miscarriage] but there is no injury, the one who hit her must be fined as the woman's husband demands from him, and he must pay according to judicial assessment.
International Standard V	“If two men are fighting and they strike a pregnant woman and her children are born prematurely, <sup>v</sup> but there is no harm, he is certainly to be fined as the husband of the woman demands of him, and he will pay as the court decides. <sup>w</sup> <sup>v</sup> 21:22 Lit. <i>children come out</i> <sup>w</sup> 21:22 Or <i>according to the assessment</i>
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	.

Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	If men fight together and hurt a pregnant woman so that she miscarries, but there is no other injury to her, then the guilty man must surely be fined as the woman's husband demands it from him, and he must pay as the judges determine.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And if men will collude to afflict a pregnant woman and her children are expelled, and there will not be a disaster, a punishment will they be punished, as suggested by the woman's husband, and he will give as the ruling.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	If men are fighting and a pregnant woman is hit, so that the child is born prematurely but she is not injured, the one who hurt her will pay the fine demanded by her husband and allowed by the court.
The Heritage Bible	If men quarrel, and strike a woman with child, and her child goes out, and there is no hurt, he, bearing a penalty, shall bear a penalty, according as the woman's lord will place upon him; and he shall give according to the judges.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New English Bible—1970	When, in the course of a brawl, a man knocks against a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but suffers no further hurt, then the offender must pay whatever fine the woman's husband demands after assessment.
New Jerusalem Bible	'If people, when brawling, hurt a pregnant woman and she suffers a miscarriage but no further harm is done, the person responsible will pay compensation as fixed by the woman's master, paying as much as the judges decide.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If people are fighting with each other and happen to hurt a pregnant woman so badly that her unborn child dies, then, even if no other harm follows, he must be fined. He must pay the amount set by the woman's husband and confirmed by judges.
exeGesés companion Bible	If men strive, and smite a woman that she conceives, so that her fruit departs from her and yet no mischief follows, in penalizing, penalize him, according as the master of the woman sets on him; and he gives according to the judges.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And when men fight, and they strike a pregnant woman, and her child goes forth, and there is no injury, being fined he shall be fined. As much as the husband of the woman shall put on him, even he shall give through the judges.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.
Tree of Life Version	"If men fight, and hit a pregnant woman so that her child is born early, yet no harm follows, the one who hit her is to be strictly fined, according to what the woman's husband demands of him. He must pay as the judges determine.

### Weird English, 𐤇𐤁𐤏𐤃 English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	AND IF TWO MEN STRIVE AND SMITE A WOMAN WITH CHILD, AND HER CHILD BE BORN IMPERFECTLY FORMED, HE SHALL BE FORCED TO PAY A PENALTY: AS THE WOMAN'S HUSBAND MAY LAY UPON HIM, HE SHALL PAY WITH A VALUATION.
Awful Scroll Bible	Were men to scurry, even are to have struck a woman that is pregnant, and her child is to have come forth, there being no harm to her, as to penalized was he was to be penalized, that the woman's husband was to fix, even was he to requite the assessment.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version	. When men strive together and strike a pregnant woman, and her child comes forth, and no mishap comes to be, he shall be fined, yea fined just as the woman's possessor shall impose on him, and he will pay through mediators. "
Darby Translation	And if men strive together, and strike a woman with child, so that she be delivered, and no mischief happen, he shall in any case be fined, according as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and shall give it as the judges estimate.
exeGeses companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	And when men strive together and push against a woman with child, and she miscarry, hut there is no other mischief, he shall, surely be fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him, but he shall give it through judges.
Third Millennium Bible	.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"If men fight with each other and injure a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely [and the baby lives], yet there is no further injury, the one who hurt her must be punished with a fine [paid] to the woman's husband, as much as the judges decide.
The Expanded Bible	"Suppose two men are fighting and ·hit [injure] a pregnant woman, causing ·the baby to come out [or a miscarriage; <sup>c</sup> the Hebrew is not clear whether dead or alive]. If there is no further ·injury [harm], the man who caused the accident must pay money—whatever amount the woman's husband says and the court allows.
The Geneva Bible Kretzmann's Commentary	. If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, the pregnant woman interposing between the quarreling men, so that her fruit depart from her, that a miscarriage occurs, and yet no mischief follow, if the woman herself is not injured and if her ability to bear children is not impaired, he shall be surely punished, that is, the guilty man, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine; the injured parties being awarded damages according to the merits of the case.
Syndein/Thieme	{Principal - No Life in the Womb - Murder of an Embryo not a Capital Offence <sup>31</sup> } And if men struggle/fight . . . and strike/hurt a pregnant woman . . . so that she has a miscarriage . . . and yet there is no further injury . . . he {the offender} will definitely be fined, according as the woman's husband may demand of him . . . and he shall pay as the judges decides {the husband states his damages and the judges decide a fair amount- financial damages only - no criminal charges}. [Here, the Hebrew does not say that the woman has a miscarriage; it says, <i>her children come out of her</i> .]
The Voice	If two men are fighting with each other and <i>happen to</i> hit a pregnant woman <i>during the quarrel</i> causing her to give birth prematurely (but no other harm is done), then the one who hit her must pay whatever fine the judges determine based upon the amount demanded by the woman's husband.

<sup>31</sup> This is one of the very few places which I disagree with R. B. Thieme, Jr. I believe that he makes an incorrect application of all the facts found here and elsewhere in Scripture.

## Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

And should men quarrel and hit a pregnant woman, and she miscarries but there is no fatality, he shall surely be punished, when the woman's husband makes demands of him, and he shall give [restitution] according to the judges' [orders].

**And should men quarrel:** with one another, and [one] intended to strike his fellow, and [instead] struck a woman. [From Sanh. 79a]

**and hit a pregnant woman:** Heb. ופגנו הפיגו is only an expression of pushing and striking, as [in the following phrases:] "lest you strike רגלך your foot with a stone" (Ps. 91:12); "and before your feet are bruised (ופגתו)" (Jer. 13:16); "and a stone upon which to dash oneself (פגו)" (Isa. 8:14).

**but there is no fatality:** with the woman. -[From Sanh. 79a, Jonathan]

**he shall surely be punished:** to pay the value of the fetuses to the husband. They assess her [for] how much she was valued to be sold in the market, increasing her value because of her pregnancy. -[From B.K. 49a] I. e., the court figures how much she would be worth if sold as a pregnant slave when customers would take into account the prospect of the slaves she would bear, and her value as a slave without the pregnancy. The assailant must pay the difference between these two amounts. -[B.K. 48b, 49a]

**he shall surely be punished:** Heb. שונע שונע. They shall collect monetary payment from him, like שונע [in the verse] "And they shall fine (ו שונע) him one hundred [shekels of] silver" (Deut. 22:19). [From Mechilta]

**when the woman's husband makes demands of him:** When the husband sues him [the assailant] in court to levy upon him punishment for that.

**and he shall give [restitution]:** The assailant [shall give] the value of the fetuses.

**according to the judges:** Heb. מיללם, according to the verdict of the judges. -[From Mechilta]

Kaplan Translation

*Personal Damages*

[This is the law] when two men fight and [accidentally] harm a pregnant woman, causing her to miscarry. If there is no fatal injury [to the woman], then [the guilty party] must pay a [monetary] penalty. The woman's husband must sue for it, and [the amount] is then determined by the courts.

**must sue for it**

(Bava Kama 43a; Rashi).

NET Bible®

"If men fight and hit a pregnant woman and her child is born prematurely,<sup>51</sup> but there is no serious injury, he will surely be punished in accordance with what the woman's husband demands of him, and he will pay what the court decides."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51tn</sup> This line has occasioned a good deal of discussion. It may indicate that the child was killed, as in a miscarriage; or it may mean that there was a premature birth. The latter view is taken here because of the way the whole section is written: (1) "her children come out" reflects a birth and not the loss of children, (2) there is no serious damage, and (3) payment is to be set for any remuneration. The word אסון ('ason) is translated "serious damage." The word was taken in Mekilta to mean "death." U. Cassuto says the point of the phrase is that neither the woman or the children that are born die (Exodus, 275). But see among the literature on this: M. G. Kline, "Lex Talionis and the Human Fetus," JETS 20 (1977): 193-201; W. House, "Miscarriage or Premature Birth: Additional Thoughts on Exodus 21:22-25," WTJ 41 (1978): 108-23; S. E. Loewenstamm, "Exodus XXI 22-25," VT 27 (1977): 352-60.

<sup>52tn</sup> The word מיללם (biflilim) means "with arbitrators." The point then seems to be that the amount of remuneration for damages that was fixed by the husband had to be approved by the courts. S. R. Driver mentions an alternative to this unusual reading presented by Budde,

reading מילפנב as “untimely birth” (Exodus, 219). See also E. A. Speiser, “The Stem PLL in Hebrew,” JBL 82 (1963): 301-6.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and (if) men struggle, and they smite a pregnant woman, and her boys go out, (but) harm did not exist, he will :surely: be fined <just as> the master of the woman will set down upon him, and he will give the judgments,...
Charles Thomson OT Context Group Version	. And if men strive together, and hurt a pregnant woman so that her children come out, [even if] no harm follows; he shall be surely fined, according to as the woman's man shall lay on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.
English Standard Version	"When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.
Green's Literal Translation Modern English Version	. If men fight and hurt a pregnant woman so that her child is born prematurely, [Or <i>she has a miscarriage</i> ] yet there is no serious injury, then he shall be surely punished in accordance with what the woman's husband demands of him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	If men fight, and strike a pregnant woman, so that the child comes forth, without harm, he shall be punished to pay a fine as the woman's husband imposes upon him; and he shall pay according to the assessment.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	"If men fight and hurt a pregnant woman so that she gives birth prematurely, and yet no harm follows, he shall be surely fined as much as the woman's husband demands and the judges allow.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"And when men strive, and have smitten a pregnant woman, and her children have come out, and there is no mischief, he is certainly fined, as the husband of the woman does lay upon him, and he has given through the judges...

**The gist of this passage:** Two men get into a fight and bump into a pregnant woman, causing her to prematurely go into labor and to give birth. If there is no harm, then the man causing the problem will be fined.

### Exodus 21:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וי) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251



## Exodus 21:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
nâtsâh (נָצַח) [pronounced <i>naw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to contend [struggle, strive] with one another; to lay waste [to a land], to strip a land bare in war; to make desolate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5327 BDB #663
ʾănâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i> ]; ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers; some of the men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** *And when [two] men struggle...*

We begin with two conjunctions. The waw conjunction *wê* (or *vê*) (ו or ו) [pronounced *weh*]; the wâw (or vâwv) (it is pronounced like a *v* in modern Hebrew and sometimes like a *w* in ancient Hebrew). This is our waw conjunction and it simply means *and*. *And* continues the story, the list, the laws, etc. The second conjunction is kîy (כי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *that, when, because, since, for*. It indicates causal relationships of all kinds, antecedent and consequent. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. Together, these two conjunctions mean, *and when*. This is followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine plural, Niphal imperfect of the word nâtsâh (נָצַח) [pronounced *naw-TSAW*] and it means *to struggle, to fight, to strive*. Strong's #5327 BDB #663. Although the Niphal stem is generally the passive, it also expresses the individual effect upon the group when in the plural form as we have here. For this reason, we can confidently add the word *together* or *with each other*. The subject is *men*.

As sometimes happens, men get into fights; and most often, they do this when there are other people around. Part of the application here is, if these men cause any harm to anyone in their periphery, they are at fault. Simply because they are angry with one another and fighting, this does not exempt them from responsibility. How you feel emotionally does not give you a free pass in your actions.

When two people get into a fight, these men become responsible for the people and things around them.

## Exodus 21:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<i>wê</i> (or <i>vê</i> ) (ו or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHF</i> ]	<i>to strike, to strike down, to hit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61



## Exodus 21:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>pregnant, with child, having conceived</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2030 BDB #248

**Translation:** ...and they strike a pregnant woman...

V. 22b begins with the waw conjunction and the Qal perfect of nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced naw-GAHF] which is one of the words that we studied when we looked at the words for *kill*. This means *strike, smite, hurt*. Strong's #5062 BDB #619. The object of this verb is the substantive *woman* and the adjective *pregnant*. Strong's #2030 BDB #248. Let me point out something obvious—the principle of this passage is based upon a pregnant woman becoming involve in the scuffle. Based upon where God goes with this, we could certainly use the principles here to apply to a non-pregnant woman, a child, or even a piece of furniture.

The specific example is, these men are fighting and they accidentally strike or hurt a woman who is pregnant. They are fighting, they are out of control, and a woman, who likely has nothing to do with their dispute, is harmed in the process. Now, I made a number of assumptions here; but whatever the woman's reason for her being in the periphery, she is harmed by their fight.

We could make a case for anyone who suffered damages (to his person or to his property) to be able to collect a judgment of some sort from these two men.

The picture here is of two men who are caught up in mental attitude sins toward one another and they are fighting so that they do not even notice their surroundings and one of them unintentionally strikes or harms a pregnant woman. In general, this applies to unintentional harm caused to the pregnant woman. Notice that these men have nothing against this woman, she just happens to be an innocent bystander. In their fight, however, they show total disregard for those around them. The modern expression for this is *reckless endangerment*. There is no premeditated or intentional behavior toward those in their periphery, but there is also willful neglect of the safety of those who are nearby. This is like a teenage kid, being given a car too early in his maturity cycle (usually at age 16) and the first time he is out of the sight of his parents and has 100 yards of open space, he cranks it up to see what his car will do. This is willful neglect of those around him, usually because his brain is too immature to understand what the potential consequences might be. This is reckless endangerment of those around him. This is what these men were guilty of. They were not abortion doctors nor is this woman choosing to have an abortion.

## Exodus 21:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדִים) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

**Translation:** ...so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely],...

Next we have the waw conjunction<sup>32</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect of yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH] and it means *go out, come out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. The subject of this verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural yêlâdîym (יְלָדֶימָא) [pronounced yê-law-DEEM] and it doesn't mean *fruit* (as per the KJV) but it means *children, sons, boys, youth*. Strong's #3206 BDB #409. This is the same word used throughout Genesis 21 when speaking of Hagar's son and the same word used several times of Moses in Exodus 2 when he was a child. In the plural, this means *offspring*. The 3<sup>rd</sup> singular feminine suffix is translated *her*, referring back to the woman. This portion should be translated *and her offspring come out*. The way that the NKJV expresses this seems reasonable (*so that she gives birth prematurely*).

Exodus 21:22d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
âçôwn (אָצוֹן) [pronounced aw-SOWN]	<i>mischief, evil, harm, hurt</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #611 BDB #62

**Translation:** ...but [there] is no harm,...

Then we have the waw conjunction and the negative and the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular Qal imperfect of hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] and it means *to come to pass, to happen, to be*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. The subject is the rarely used word âçôwn (אָצוֹן) [pronounced aw-SOWN] and it is found only in Genesis 42:4, 38 44:29 Exodus 21:22, 23. It is translated exclusively *mischief* in the KJV and, according to BDB, means *evil, mischief, harm*. Strong's #611 BDB #62. The other passages deal with Jacob's concern over Benjamin, that *harm* may befall him (Genesis 42:4). Same word. This is unspecified harm, but it could include death as Jacob was already all worked up over thinking that Joseph had died (Genesis 42:38). The imperfect tense and the use of the word hâyâh means that this harm is not something which occurs immediately—that is, the causing of the pregnant woman to give birth is not completely the issue, but what occurs in the aftermath. *And her offspring come out and there was no harm*.

Exodus 21:22c-d ...so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows,... (NKJV)

Exodus 21:22c-d ...so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

<sup>32</sup> Notice I am giving you almost every single word in this verse since it is used by both sides to justify their position

The result is that the mother gives birth prematurely; she, after a reasonable amount of time and the child, after a reasonable amount of time, are determined to be in satisfactory condition with no ill effects following the brawl.

In the situation described, the woman gives birth prematurely. The first case considered is, she gives birth and the child is (children are) born alive. Literally this reads, *her children go out of her and there was no harm*. This means that the woman gives birth prematurely, but is not harmed and her child is not harmed. Women deliver live children after being jarred, jostled, knocked around or having other circumstances which induce pregnancy.

I would further suggest that this is the correct understanding here, as the word *yēlādîym* (יְלָדִים) [pronounced *yē-law-DEEM*] is used. It means, *children, descendants*. Strong's #3206 BDB #409. This word can mean *fruit*, but that does not appear to be its primary meaning when found in the plural. In the KJV, in the plural, this word is translated *children* 32 times and *sons* 3 times. The only time in the KJV when this is translated *fruit*. It is not unusual for there to be inconsistencies in the KJV because there were many people involved in its translation (*inconsistent* simply means the original Hebrew word is given several different translations when it shouldn't be). If a word less human than *children* or *sons* is to be found, that would be in this passage alone (and mostly as a result of the influence of the KJV, which translates this word *fruit*, here and here only). Examples of translations from e-sword which follow the KJV in this verse: ARV 2005, BSV, ECB, IAV, MLV, Niobi SB, RHB6r, the Disciples' Bible and the WoY. This is clearly a poor translation because it can be too dehumanizing.

Whereas, the examples of translations which use the word *fruit* are Bibles of minor note; there are a handful of translations which use the word *miscarriage*: CEV, Charles Thompson, Rotherham, UDB, ULLB, and the UTV.<sup>33</sup> Again, these are not the most notable translations. However, I must admit to being surprised by the number of translations I find on line which use the word *miscarriage*, which, again, is not actually the word found here. This is a miscarriage which is taking place *only* if the child (children) die. It is accurately called a premature birth if they are born alive.

Again, this phrase literally reads, *and her children come out of her and there was no harm*; which suggests a premature birth rather than a miscarriage.

Furthermore, I believe that this general concept could be applied to any bystander who is harmed when there is a fight that breaks out. If there is a fight between A and B, but C is injured; and C has a case against A and B (can you tell I used to teach algebra?).

Exodus 21:22c-d ...so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows,... (NKJV)

Exodus 21:22c-d ...so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It is at this point that some commentators go awry. Would no harm mean that baby dies and the woman remains alive, but basically unharmed? I simply cannot buy that as being what is meant here. If there was a dead baby laying on the ground as a result of this altercation, I do not think that there is any other way to interpret that scenario as anything other than harm. If the woman suffers injury; that would be considered *harm*; if the child suffers injury, that would be considered *harm* as well. It is illogical to apply the word *harm* only in the case where the woman is harmed.

<sup>33</sup> I used the Bible translations available from e-sword to collect these two groups.

So, when the text says *there is no harm*, I would understand this to mean that, there is no harm to the child and no harm to the woman. Obviously, in this situation, she would be very near to giving birth, and this jostle from the fight is enough to cause her to give birth. She gives birth and mother and child (children) are doing fine. That would be the correct understanding of there being no harm which takes place.

Now, if the commentator reads this and understands this to mean, “The baby dies, but the woman is okay, so there is no harm.” That approach is simply illogical, as the verse does not specify harm to the woman only.

Can you imagine the mother giving birth to a stillborn children, and both parents saying, “Well, no big deal; the child is not alive, but he/she never was truly alive. Give us \$500 and we walk away.” ? That is illogical to understand a miscarriage, where the child was born dead, to fall within the realm of the meaning of the words, *there is no harm*.

Exodus 21:22e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘ânash (אָנַשׁ) [pronounced gaw-NASH]	<i>to fine, to impose a fine; to punish; to condemn, to amerce</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #6064 BDB #778
‘ânash (אָנַשׁ) [pronounced gaw-NASH]	<i>to be fined, to receive a fine; to be punished; to be condemned</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6064 BDB #778
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka’âsher (כְּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, as just, according as; because; according to what manner, in a manner as, when, about when</i> . Back in 1Sam. 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> . In Gen. 44:1, I have translated this, <i>as much as</i> .			
shîyth (שִׁיט) [pronounced sheeth]	<i>to put, to set, place; to appoint; to arrange, to set in order; to found; to station</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011
‘al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside; because of, on account of</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ba‘al (בַּעַל) [pronounced BAH-gah]	<i>owner, lord, husband; master; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1167 BDB #127
’ishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61

**Translation:** ...[the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines;...

We then have the doubling of the verb 'ânash (אָנַשׁ) [pronounced *gaw-NASH*]. It means *to assess a fine, to inflict a penalty* and is found in this passage, Deuteronomy 22:19 2Chronicles 36:3 Proverbs 17:26 21:11 22:3 27:12 Amos 2:8. Deuteronomy 22:19 and 2Chronicles 36:3 both indicates that this can be a fine, however Proverbs 21:11 and 22:3 imply that punishment other than a fine can be involved. Strong's #6064 BDB #778. Only here do we find this word doubled; first in the Qal infinitive absolute and secondly in the Niphal imperfect. I prefer the translation *certainly (definitely) punished*, because that includes the possibility of a fine without excluding other forms of punishment.

Exodus 21:22a-e *And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines;...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Bear in mind, this is a fine or penalty even though mother and child do not suffer any harm.

I would assume that the man who harms this woman (perhaps, he strikes her), he is going to be fined. Now, I do not believe that this would necessarily fall on the shoulders of one man alone, depending upon all that happens.

Now, note that we have, there will certainly result the fining of at least one of the men. His punishment could go beyond a simple fine. In any case, *no harm follows* is associated with a definite punishment.

So, there is this scuffle, the woman is caused to give birth, but, in the end, baby and mother are doing fine; then there will be a fine placed upon the man (or men) who cause this to happen in the first place. That is the minimum that they will face.

The husband says, "I believe that this is what I am owed here," and that could be the fine. Clearly, there are liability issues here. Even when everyone is fine, there are still liability issues.

Let's move into the future to the year 2019 (and 2024) (when I am writing this) and ask, what would happen if some idiot punched a pregnant woman in the stomach and she gave birth to a still born child as a result. Would that be the end of it? Would he pay her a \$500 (or \$5000 fine) and be done with it? I would suggest that many prosecutors would pursue this as a case of voluntary manslaughter; and possibly even as 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder. Let me add that would be legitimate.

Exodus 21:22f			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
pâlîyl (פְּלִיִּל) [pronounced <i>paw-LEEL</i> ]	<i>judges, magistrates</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #6414 (& #6419) BDB #813.

**Translation:** *...and he will pay [lit., give] as the judges [determine].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)



The rest of this verse is rather simple. *He will make restitution* or *he shall pay* is simply the Qal perfect of *nāthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*] and it means *give, put, set*. It is not strictly a word for paying a fine, but it does not exclude that notion. It has a wide variance of applications. Very likely this was strictly a monetary fine; however, the language is not such that it would confine us to such an interpretation. Strong's #5414 BDB #678.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of the last word in the sentence. It is the prefixed preposition *in, at, by* and the word *pheliliym* (פְּלִילִיִּם) [pronounced *pel-eel-eem(?)*] and although it is definitely related to the Hebrew word for *intervene, interpose* it is guessed that this is the same word as *pālīyl* (פָּלִיֵל) [pronounced *paw-LEEL*], which means *judge* and is found only in Deuteronomy 32:31 and Job 31:11. Strong's #6414 (& #6419) BDB #813.. Our problem is not the vowel points but the yod which is missing. My educated guess is that it is a different but related word and I would tend to go with the NASB's rendering *by arbitration*, except that in the Hebrew, this is plural. Perhaps *by judicial proceedings* would be a reasonable rendering.

So, there are judges involved as well. So, let me suggest that the husband says, "This is what I believe I am owed for what you did." The judges would possibly modify the demands of the husband. So the husband makes a demand, and the judge (or judges) consider it, and makes the final ruling on the amount due the family. Again, the amount due is a fine based upon *there being no harm*.

I believe that A Voice in the Wilderness gives us a good, literal translation: *If men fight, and strike a pregnant woman, so that the child comes forth, without harm, he shall be punished to pay a fine as the woman's husband imposes upon him; and he shall pay according to the assessment.*

Bear in mind that the final words could mean, *according to the judicial proceedings*.

Exodus 21:22 *And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines; and he will pay [lit., give] as the judges [determine].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Notice how the court works. The husband of the woman will go into court and make specific demands, then the judge will examine the facts of the case, take into consideration the circumstances and render a judgment which certainly will be some kind of a punishment (and the doubling of the verb does not mean some little trivial thing such as the defendant shall pay damages in the amount of one dollar). There will be a fine or a punishment levied appropriate to the crime. Again, this is when no harm follows.

Exodus 21:22 *And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines; and he will pay [lit., give] as the judges [determine].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

In the rest of this passage, we will consider the judicial ramifications if there is some sort of harm which follows.

Exodus 21:22 *Let's say that there are two men who are fighting, and one smashes into a pregnant woman standing nearby so that she gives birth prematurely [that is, she gives birth]. If there is no harm or injury that results, then the man who harmed the woman will be fined. The husband will suggest an amount and the judges may modify his demands.* (Kukis paraphrase)

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We continue with the same incident, but this time, with an outcome described as being harmful or evil.



**And if harm is, and you have given a soul in exchange for a soul, an eye in exchange for an eye, a tooth in exchange for a tooth, a hand in exchange for a hand, a foot in exchange for a foot, a burn in exchange for a burn, a wound in exchange for a wound, [and] a stripe in exchange for a stripe.**

Exodus  
21:23–25

**If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a stripe for a stripe.**

**However, if there is harm or injury which follows (either to the mother or child), then the guilty party will pay, giving his life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, or a stripe for a stripe.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And if harm is, and you have given a soul in exchange for a soul, an eye in exchange for an eye, a tooth in exchange for a tooth, a hand in exchange for a hand, a foot in exchange for a foot, a burn in exchange for a burn, a wound in exchange for a wound, [and] a stripe in exchange for a stripe.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	But if death take place, thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot., burning for burning, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	But if death befall her, then thou shalt judge the life of the killer for the life of the woman. The value of an eye for an eye, the value of a tooth for a tooth, the value of a hand for a hand, the value of a foot for a foot, all equivalent of the pain of burning for burning, and of wounding for wounding, and of blow for blow.
Revised Douay-Rheims	But if her death ensue thereupon, he shall render life for life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	But if any harm follows, then you must take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	But if any mischief follow, then you shall give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, slap for slap.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	But if it be perfectly formed, he shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Significant differences:

#### **Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	But if damage comes to her, let life be given in payment for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, blow for blow.
Easy English	But if the man has hurt the child, you must take a life for a life. You must take an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth. You must take a hand for a hand or a foot for a foot. You must take a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.'

[21:25] If the cruel man has hurt the child, they must hurt him too. If the child dies, the man must die. Every part of the child that the man has hurt, they must hurt that part of the man. A 'burn' is a mark on the body that fire causes. A 'wound' is a place where someone has cut the skin. A 'bruise' is a mark on the skin where someone has hit a person.

Easy-to-Read Version—2001 .

Easy-to-Read Version—2006 "Two men might be fighting and hurt a pregnant woman. This might make the woman give birth to her baby before its time. If the woman was not hurt badly,[Or "killed."] the man who hurt her must pay a fine. The woman's husband will decide how much the man must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be. But if the woman was hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must be punished. The punishment must fit the crime. You must trade one life for another life. You must trade an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a cut for a cut. V. 22 is included for context.

God's Word™

If anyone is injured, the offender must pay a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a wound for a wound.

Good News Bible (TEV)  
The Message

But if there is further damage, then you must give life for life—eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Names of God Bible  
NIRV

But if someone is badly hurt, a life must be taken for a life. An eye must be put out for an eye. A tooth must be knocked out for a tooth. A hand must be cut off for a hand and a foot for a foot. A burn must be given for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a bruise for a bruise.

New Simplified Bible

»The payment will be for life if she is seriously injured, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, »burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. It appears that a portion of v. 22 is included for context.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible .  
College Press Bible Study .  
Contemporary English V.

But if she is seriously injured, the payment will be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, cut for cut, and bruise for bruise.

The Living Bible

"If two men are fighting, and in the process hurt a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage, but she lives, then the man who injured her shall be fined whatever amount the woman's husband shall demand, and as the judges approve. But if any harm comes to the woman and she dies, he shall be executed.

"If her eye is injured, injure his; if her tooth is knocked out, knock out his; and so on—hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, lash for lash. V. 22 is included for context.

New Berkeley Version .  
New Life Version

"If men fight with each other and hit a woman who is going to have a child so that she loses her baby but no other hurt comes to her, he must pay whatever the woman's husband says he must, as agreed upon by the judges. But if there is other hurt also, then it is life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, cut for cut, sore for sore. V. 22 is included for context.

New Living Translation

But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.

Unlocked Dynamic Bible	But if the woman is hurt in another way, the one who hurt her must be caused to suffer in the same way that he caused her to suffer. If she dies, he must be killed. If her eye is hurt, or if he knocks out her teeth, or her hand or foot is hurt, or if she is burned or bruised, the one who hurt her must be hurt in the same way.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But if the child is born perfectly formed [though injured], he must pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, whipping for whipping.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but no other injury occurs, then the guilty party will be fined what the woman's husband demands, as negotiated with the judges.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If men fall out, and one of them strikes a woman who is pregnant, so that the child is still-born, but she herself lives, he must pay whatever sum the woman's husband demands, and the judges agree to; if her death follows, then life must pay for life.[7] So it is to be; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,[8] a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot; burning for burning, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. V. 22 is included for context. [7] 'She herself lives', 'if her death follows'; in the Hebrew text, 'no harm is done', 'if harm follows'. [8] Cf. Mt. 5.38.
Translation for Translators	But if the woman is injured in some additional way, the one who injured her must be caused to suffer in exactly the same way <i>that he caused her to suffer</i> . If she dies, he must be executed. If her eye is injured or destroyed, or if he knocks out one of her teeth, or her hand or foot is injured, or if she is burned or bruised, the one who injured her must be injured in the same way.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If further mishap does occur, then you will give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, scorching for scorching, injury for injury, and welt for welt. This detailed statement of the lex talionis is meant to restrain the injured party from exacting more vengeance than is warranted. The malefactor must suffer in precise proportion to the suffering he caused, but no more.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But if mischief ensues, you shall inflict life for life: eye for eye; tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot: mark for mark: mutilation for mutilation: wound for wound: blow for blow. '
God's Truth (Tyndale)	But and if any misfortune follow, then shall he pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound and stripe for stripe.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	If there is harm, then you are to require [Lit. <i>give</i> ] life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And if there is death, then thou shalt pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
H. C. Leupold	.

Lexham English Bible	And if there is serious injury, you will give life in place of life, eye in place of eye, tooth in place of tooth, hand in place of hand, foot in place of foot, burn in place of burn, wound in place of wound, bruise in place of bruise.
NIV, ©2011	.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	And if any harm follows, then you will deliver up life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And if there will be a disaster, and you will give a soul for a soul. An eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, hand for a hand, leg for a leg. Burn for a burn, wound for a wound, lash for a lash.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And if there is hurt, then you shall give soul for soul, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
New American Bible (2002)	But if injury ensues, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. [23-25] This section is known as the lex talionis, the law of tit for tat. The purpose of this law was not merely the enforcement of rigorous justice, but also the prevention of greater penalties than would be just. Christ refers to this passage when he exhorts Christians to cede their lawful rights for the sake of charity. Cf ⇒ Matthew 5:38-40.
New American Bible (2011)	* When men have a fight and hurt a pregnant woman, so that she suffers a miscarriage, but no further injury, the guilty one shall be fined as much as the woman's husband demands of him, and he shall pay in the presence of the judges. But if injury ensues, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. V. 22 is included for context. * [21:22-25] This law of talion is applied here in the specific case of a pregnant woman who, as an innocent bystander, is injured by two fighting men. The law of talion is not held up as a general principle to be applied throughout the book of the covenant. (But see note on Lv 24:19-20.) Here this principle of rigorous accountability aimed to prevent injury to a woman about to give birth by apparently requiring the assailant to have his own wife injured as she was about to bring new life into his family. However, it is debatable whether talion was ever understood or applied literally in Israel. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges his audience to find a deeper form of justice than the supposed equilibrium offered by talion (Mt 5:38-40). Lv 24:18-21; Dt 19:21; Mt 5:38.
New English Bible—1970	Wherever hurt is done, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.
New Jerusalem Bible	If further harm is done, however, you will award life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stroke for stroke.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	But where injury ensues, you are to give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	.
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exeGesés companion Bible	And if any mischief follows, then you give soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, blister for blister, wound for wound, lash for lash.
Hebraic Roots Bible	But if injury occurs, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, branding for branding, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.
Tree of Life Version	But if any harm follows, [i.e., a miscarriage] then you are to penalize life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, blow for blow.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	BUT IF IT BE PERFECTLY FORMED, HE SHALL GIVE LIFE FOR LIFE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT, BURNING FOR BURNING, WOUND FOR WOUND, STRIPE FOR STRIPE.
Awful Scroll Bible	Is there harm? - there is to have been given breath for breath, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version	. Yet if a mishap comes to be then you will give soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, scorching for scorching, injury for injury, welt for welt.
Darby Translation	.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if any ason (harm, fatality) follow, then thou shalt take nefesh for nefesh, Ayin for ayin, shen for shen, yad for yad, regel for regel, Burn for burn, wound for wound, chaburah (stripe laceration) for chaburah.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	And if any misfortune follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But if there is any further injury, then you shall require [as a penalty] life for life, <sup>[d]</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. [d] The concept of reciprocal punishment for a wrongful injury is applied mainly to special cases not already covered by more complex laws.
The Expanded Bible	If there is no further ·injury [harm], the man who caused the accident must pay money—whatever amount the woman's husband says and the court allows. But if there is further ·injury [harm], then ·the punishment that must be paid is [ <sup>l</sup> you shall give] life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, and bruise for bruise [ <sup>c</sup> to guard against excessive punishment].

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. That was the law of retaliation as it could be invoked by such as sought indemnity for injuries: the injured woman might demand expiation according to the degree of her hurt. That was the ordinance so far as free Israelites were concerned.

Syndein/Thieme

{Capital Punishment though if the Mother Dies}

But if there is any greater injury {death to the Mother}, then you will give life for a life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe/whipping for stripe/whipping.

The Voice

But if any further harm comes, then the standard for the punishment is *reciprocal justice*: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,[c] a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

But if there is a fatality, you shall give a life for a life,...

**But if there is a fatality:** with the woman.

**you shall give a life for a life:** Our Rabbis differ on this matter. Some say [that he must] actually [give up his] life, and some say [that he must pay] money, but not actually a life, and if one intends to kill one person and kills another, he is exempt from the death penalty and must pay his [the victim's] heirs his value, as [it would be if] he were sold in the marketplace. -[From Mechilta, Sanh. 79]

...an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,...

**an eye for an eye:** If [a person] blinds his neighbor's eye, he must give him the value of his eye, [which is] how much his price to be sold in the marketplace has decreased [without the eye]. So is the meaning of all of them [i.e., all the injuries enumerated in the following verses], but not the actual amputation of a limb, as our Rabbis interpreted it in the chapter entitled לְבוֹתָהּ, he who assaults. -[From B.K. 83b, 84a]

...a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.

**a burn for a burn:** Heb. הָיִיךְ, a burn caused by fire. [Rashi probably alludes to שֵׁאֵ-תִּוְכֶם in Lev. 13:24.] Until now [the Torah] spoke of an injury that decreases the value [of the victim], and now of [an injury] that does not decrease the [victim's] value [as a slave] but causes pain, for instance if he [the assailant] burned him [the victim] on his nails with a spit, they [the judges] compute how much [money] a person like him would be willing to take to endure such pain. -[From B.K. 84a, Mechilta]

**a wound:** Heb. עָצָץ, a wound that bleeds, where he wounded his [victim's] flesh, navredure in Old French, all according to what it [the wound] is. If it decreases his value, he [the assailant must] pay [for the] damage; if he falls into idleness, he [must] pay for idleness, and for healing, shame, and pain. This verse is superfluous [because there is no difference between a wound and a burn. Whatever damage he inflicts he must pay]. In [the chapter] לְבוֹתָהּ (B.K. 84a), our Rabbis interpreted it as making one liable for [the victim's] pain even where there is [permanent] damage [which he must pay for], because although he pays him [the victim] the value of his hand, we do not exempt him from the [payment compensating for the victim's] pain, reasoning that since he [the assailant] purchased his [the victim's] hand [by giving the victim payment for its value], he may amputate it with whatever he wants. We say, however, that he should amputate it with a medication that lessens the pain. However, [if] he cut it off with [an] iron [implement] and caused him pain [he must give the victim compensation]. -[From B.K. 85a]



**a bruise:** Heb. הַרְבֹּחַ. This is a blow in which blood collects but does not come out. It only reddens the flesh on that spot. The term הַרְבֹּחַ is equivalent to tache in Old French [meaning] a spot, like “or a leopard its spots (וְיִתְרַבְּחָ) ” (Jer. 13:23). Its Aramaic translation is כְּפִיּוּקְשָׁם, an expression of beating, batedure in Old French, [meaning] beating, knocking, and so, מִיִּדְקָתוֹפֶדֶד שׁ (Gen. 41:23) [is translated by Onkelos as:] מִפִּיקֵשׁ מִדֵּק, [which means] “beaten by the [east] wind,” and similarly, “on the lintel (וְיִזְקֶשְׁמָהּ לַעֲ) ” (Exod. 12:7), [is given this appellation] because the door bangs against it [the lintel]. [See commentary on Exod. 12:7.]

Kaplan Translation

However, if there is a fatal injury [to the woman], then he must pay full compensation for her life. Full compensation must be paid for the loss of an eye, a tooth, a hand or a foot. Full compensation must [also] be paid for a burn, a wound, or a bruise.

**must pay full compensation...**

This is speaking of a case where a woman's assailant did not intend to kill the man with whom he was fighting (Chidushey HaRan, Sanhedrin 79b; cf. Yad, Rotze'ach 4:1). Literally, 'you must give a soul for a soul.' According to some, this is speaking of a case where the woman's assailant intended to kill the other man, and there is a dispute as to whether this expression implies the death penalty or monetary payment (Sanhedrin 79a,b).

**Full compensation...**

(Mekhilta; Targum Yonathan; Bava Kama 84a; Rashi). Literally, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.' These expressions, however, are meant idiomatically and not literally. See Leviticus 24:19,20, Deuteronomy 19:21.

**a wound**

Or, 'cut' (Rashi; Radak, Sherashim).

**a bruise**

(Rashi). Or, 'a wound' (Saadia; Ibn Janach); or, 'a scrape' (Radak, Sherashim).

But if there is serious injury, then you will give a life for a life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53sn</sup> The text now introduces the Lex Talionis with cases that were not likely to have applied to the situation of the pregnant woman. See K. Luke, “Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth,” Indian Theological Studies 16 (1979): 326-43.

NET Bible®

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...(but) if harm does exist, (then) you will give a being (in place of) a being, an eye (in place of) an eye, a tooth (in place of) a tooth, a hand (in place of) a hand, a foot (in place of) a foot, a singeing (in place of) a singeing, a bruise (in place of) a bruise, a striped bruise (in place of) a striped bruise,...

Charles Thomson OT If two men fight and strike a woman with child and she miscarry of an embryo, atonement shall be made by a fine. According as the husband of the woman shall with a judicial decision lay upon him, he shall pay: but if the child be compleatly organised he shall give, life for life; eye for eye; tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot; burning for burning; wound for wound; stripe for stripe. V. 22 is included for context.

C. Thompson (updated) OT .  
Context Group Version .  
English Standard Version .  
Green's Literal Translation .  
Modern English Version

But if there is any serious injury, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	But if there is <i>any further</i> injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise [Lit <i>welt</i> ] for bruise.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	But if <i>any</i> harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	But if there is harm, then you shall requite soul for soul; eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"...and if there is mischief, then you have given life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

**The gist of this passage:** If, after this scuffle, harm is the outcome, then there will be a proportionate measure of justice.

23-25

Exodus 21:23a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ʿâçôwn (אָוֶן) [pronounced <i>aw-SOWN</i> ]	<i>mischief, evil, harm, hurt</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #611 BDB #62
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

**Translation:** If [there] is harm [which follows],...

V. 23 will be easier because we have just covered most of the words found in this verse. It begins with the waw conjunction, uses the word ʿâçôwn (אָוֶן) [pronounced *aw-SOWN*] again (*harm*) along with the Qal imperfect of hâyâh. Strong's #611 BDB #62 and Strong's #1961 BDB #224.

Vv. 22–25 present us with a binary outcome. Two men have a fight, a pregnant woman is harmed in some way, and her child (children) come out of her. One possibility is there is no harm which follows

(v. 22), and at least one of the men is fined. Vv. 23–25 provide the other possibility, where there is *harm* which follows.

Exodus 21:23a *If [there] is harm [which follows],...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Outcome #2 is now under consideration. There might have been harm that follows. Let me suggest that this is harm to the woman or to the child. I believe that is the reasonable interpretation here.

There are two points of view regarding the harm that follows—and this is clear in many of the translations. (1) The harm spoken of only applies to the woman herself; or (2) the harm means something happens to the woman or to the child (or to both of them).

Let's say that we should understand this to mean, *if there is harm to the woman...* Here is the problem with that: the verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular; it is not feminine. There are feminine words which could be used here for *evil*, *harm*, *hurt*; but they are not used here. Although, this reasoning in itself is not a sufficient argument to conclude that this refers to the child or to the woman; it is supporting evidence in that regard.

However, the most convincing argument to me is, let's say the woman is A-okay, but she spontaneously miscarries and there is a dead child laying there. How in the world could you objectively understand that situation to mean, *no harm followed*?

Exodus 21:23a *If [there] is harm [which follows],...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There is something else which is not a part of this verse. Did the expelled child take a breath? God the Holy Spirit chose *not* to make this an issue. A child can die in childbirth with or without taking a breath. If this is an important consideration—and I maintain that it is not—it should have been mentioned here. It is not mentioned. If a person makes the argument that a child is not truly alive unless it takes a breath, then that would be a consideration in this law. However, we have the result of harm or no harm, without a thought to the child taking a breath or not (a child could be born prematurely and live for a few days, but die due to the circumstances).

If the time of ensoulment is an issue, then this would be the time for God, Who is speaking, to make that clear. He does not. So, there are but two outcomes: harm or no harm.

Exodus 21:23a *If [there] is harm [which follows],...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This entire context leads us to a very well known principle of the Old Testament: punishment needs to be appropriate.

Let me give an example right out of this week's news (it is summer of 2019). A woman/girl opened up a Blue Bell ice cream carton at some unnamed store, licked it, and then put the carton back into the freezer. I have heard news reports of her possibly getting a 20 year sentence for this (it turns out that she is not an adult, so there is not going to be a 20 year sentence). This seems a wildly disproportionate sentence, especially considering that one political party used the FBI, possibly the CIA, and the FISA courts to spy on the other political party during the 2016 election, and these people involved might not even be investigated or go on trial (had a different presidential candidate been elected, there would not even be talk of such an investigation). In these two examples, ripped from today's headlines (examples you may not even know about, given that was a long time ago), there are wildly disproportionate outcomes for two dramatically different crimes. One cries out for a short suspended sentence, a fine and community service (not 20 years in prison); and the other cries out for 20–30 year sentences for some of the participants (by the way, anytime you consider politics as an illustration, and you

happen to belong to the political party which has done wrong; then just turn the circumstances around—say it was the other political party who involved federal agencies to go after your political party—what sort of punishment would you want for the perpetrators then?).

What follows is the concept of appropriate punishment. The punishment must fit the crime.

Exodus 21:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i> ]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i> ]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

**Translation:** ...then you will give a life for a life,...

Then we have the waw conjunction once again (which I believe would allow us to piece together this sentence in an *if...then..* form) and we have the Qal perfect of nâthan once again and this time it is clearly not a simple payment of a fine. It is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect, so it is no longer *he* but *you* to indicate the severity of the action and consequences. God is speaking to Moses, who is their first judge. Here, the word nâthan may be translated *give, pay, assess*.

Exodus 21:23b ...then you will give a life for a life,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:23b ...then the guilty party will pay, giving his life for a life,... (Kukis paraphrase)

The last phrase is the first time that we have this particular phrase. It is the word for *life* or *soul*, found twice with the preposition tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khahth*] between them. This preposition means *in exchange for, in place of, return for*. It has other meanings, but these are the most applicable. This passage is absolutely explicit because it is the first time this passage is given. It will go on for two more verses; however, when it is repeated in later portions of the Bible, it will not be repeated in its entirety as it is here. This passage gives us the principle, and whenever we need to refer back to this principle (as will occur in Leviticus 24:19–20 Deuteronomy 19:21), we will not need to quote this in its entirety. A few of the exchanges will suffice.

What follows will be a general rule, which is not applied just here, but can be rightly applied by judges at any given time when rendering any decision.

“You will give a life for a life,” which I believe indicates that, if the woman dies, the person at fault should die. If the child dies, then the person at fault should die as well. I do not see any reason to distinguish between the woman and the child, believing one life to be important and the other not to be.

Given the context, God (Who is giving this law) does not appear to be concerned about the time of ensoulment. There is no *ensoulment* digression to accompany this two outcome situation.

Exodus 21:23 *If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The judge needs to consider what happened, the culpability (one or both men would be culpable), and their punishment ought to be proportionate to the harm which their fight caused. That could include execution, and this would be if the woman dies or if the child dies.

#### Abbreviated Review of Exodus 21:22–25:

We have been studying an extremely important passage from Exodus, one which ought to give us insight as to our position, as believers, concerning abortion.

Exodus 21:22 *"If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.* (NKJV)

This leads us into one of the most well-known quotations from the Old Testament. People do not know all of it, but they do know *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*.

Exodus 21:23–25 *But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.* (NKJV)

Vv. 23–25 means, *the punishment should fit the crime*. This will concept be borne out by the rest of the chapter.

We have actually only completed v. 23, but we going to cover the rest of this passage next.

#### Exodus 21:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ʕAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ʕAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced shayn]	<i>tooth [of man, lex talionis, beast], a sharp pointed rock; tine (of fork); ivory [= tooth of an elephant] [as material, of commerce]</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042

## Exodus 21:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced shayn]	<i>tooth [of man, lex talionis, beast], a sharp pointed rock; tine (of fork); ivory [= tooth of an elephant] [as material, of commerce]</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042

**Translation:** ...an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,...

The principle being expressed is that punishment be appropriate and equivalent. This is not saying, "My child is born without an eye as a result of being jostled and giving birth prematurely, so I get to poke your eye out." Perhaps that will be the decision of the judge; but that is not the only punishment to be considered.

Exodus 21:23–24a *If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This verse introduces the very famous phrase *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life*. This is perfect law. When a criminal commits a crime (even here where it is one of negligence rather than one of intention), he causes harm—financial, physical and emotional—to the victim. The criminal does this because he can think of no one but himself. They are on the throne in their hearts; they are the king of their destiny and the people in their periphery do not matter. The pain that these other people suffer is inconsequential when it comes to what the criminal needs, wants, or desires.

This penalty shows the criminal just exactly what he has inflicted upon the victim. He feels the pain, discomfort, loss and fear that he imposed upon the victim. This is how it should be. A criminal is an arrogant person who can only understand by being treated in the same way how he has treated other people. His physical, emotional and financial well-being should be assaulted with the same neglect, carelessness and disregard that he showed with regards to the victim(s). A white collar criminal who has defrauded hundreds or thousands of people of their savings should not be riding around in a BMW and living in a mansion. A criminal who has killed a woman for the use of her car, or has killed a store clerk for \$45, should receive the death penalty without any thought to their childhood, their I.Q., their mental stability or the prodding of their friends. Just because a person comes from a poor environment or has a low I.Q., this does not excuse him from criminal activity. There are many people with low I.Q.'s and/or come from a poor environment who are moral, gentle people. Furthermore, some of these are Christians who have believed in Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in heaven. However, a criminal is a criminal and he will learn that his behavior is wrong by facing the exact same loss (or an equivalent loss) that he caused others to face. This is the antithesis of barbarism. Softer, liberal punishments does not concern the criminal. And if he is freed on the basis of a technicality when a criminal is undeniably guilty of the crime that he has been charged with, then the system of law is nothing more than a game to the criminal. This passage represents a divine principle of law that we have lost sight of and our culture is going out of control because of it. The Old Testament has a place in our thinking and it is fully applicable to the time in which we live.

We are not required by God to establish the exact same laws that we are studying (as is the case with Islam), but we are to take these principles and apply them to our lives today.



When a woman is caused to give birth prematurely, several things could occur and therefore we have a lot of generalities in this verse. She could die, the baby could die, either one could be injured; and everyone could survive just fine.

As I have previously stated my prejudice: as retroactive birth control, I cringe at the thought of abortion. A Christian woman who is not fully convinced one way or the other by God's Word should not ever chose to have an abortion because it would be more convenient to have the baby at another time. In some cases, the actions preceding the pregnancy were sins and in other cases, we are speaking of a married couple who are just not ready for children (or another child) at this time. However, God is telling them that it is time and His timing is perfect.

If you have studied David's solution to his Bathsheba problem, you know that, while one of his most faithful men was out on the front lines, David slept with that man's wife and impregnated her. David's final solution was to kill the husband. That would solve David's problems (he tried some other things, but they did not work out). So David compounded his sins and by the time he named his sins to God, God made him pay fourfold. An abortion will not solve your problems any more than David's killing of the cuckolded husband solved his. When you have sinned, then you go right to God in rebound. Afterward, you allow Him to direct you, not choosing that which is convenient as automatically God's will.

Exodus 21:24b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control; responsibility</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control; responsibility</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
regel (לֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-gel]	<i>foot; metaphorically step, gait, pace; turn</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
regel (לֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-gel]	<i>foot; metaphorically step, gait, pace; turn</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

**Translation:** ...a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,...

Again, an appropriate and equal punishment is called for. The concept being taught here is finding the appropriate punishment. The Bible does not have a series of crimes punishable by cutting off someone's hands or feet.

There is one exception to this, and this is a woman who grabs the testicles of a man with the intent of stopping him who is in a fight with her husband—her hand was to be cut off without pity towards her. Deuteronomy 25:11–12. The context of the fight seems to indicate that this was a mutually agreed upon fight, and the wife enters into the fray to permanently injure her husband's opponent. At some point in time, we will study that passage.

However, this is a singular case and not what is being called for here.

If you would rather, we could have translated this as: *If any harm comes to pass, then you will appoint life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.* There is no indefinite article in the Hebrew as there is in the English so the lack of a definite article sometimes is the same as our lack of a definite article and their lack of a definite article sometimes corresponds to our use of the indefinite article (which is even more complicated in the Greek).

Exodus 21:23–24 *If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:25			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
keṽyâh (הַיָּאָה) [pronounced kev-ee-YAW]	burning, branding, branding scar, burn	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3555 BDB #465
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
keṽyâh (הַיָּאָה) [pronounced kev-ee-YAW]	burning, branding, branding scar, burn	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3555 BDB #465
petsa' (פֶּצַע) [pronounced peh-TSAH]	bruise, wound	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6482 BDB #822
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
petsa' (פֶּצַע) [pronounced peh-TSAH]	bruise, wound	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6482 BDB #822
chabburâh (חַבְּרָה) [pronounced khahb-bu-RAW]	stripe, bruise, mark, blow	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2250 BDB #289
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
chabburâh (חַבְּרָה) [pronounced khahb-bu-RAW]	stripe, bruise, mark, blow	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2250 BDB #289

**Translation:** ...a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a stripe for a stripe.

The last two nouns in this verse are the word *chabburâh* (חַבְּרָה) [pronounced *khahb-bu-RAW*] and it means *stripe, blow* and is so translated; although it is also translated *bruise, welt*; this is the word found in Isaiah 53:5.

This general principle can be applied in many situations; and this is something that a judge needs to keep in mind when determining the exact punishment. One more thing: it is the judge who determines the appropriate punishment. This is not for the victim to determine (or those who are friends or relatives of the victim).

Exodus 21:23–25 If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a stripe for a stripe. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:22–25 Let's say that there are two men who are fighting, and one smashes into a pregnant woman standing nearby so that she gives birth prematurely. If there is no harm or injury that results, then the man who harmed the woman will be fined. The husband will suggest an amount and the judges may modify his demands. However, if there is harm or injury which follows (either to the mother or child), then the guilty party will pay, giving his life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, or a stripe for a stripe. (Kukis paraphrase)

There just is not a better or simpler or more general form as a code of law on which ours should be based. Our system of justice has become complex and unwieldy. We have too many people who are innocent incarcerated for crimes they did not commit; we have far too many guilty people who are freed on technicalities which have absolutely nothing to do with their guilt or their innocence but oft times eliminate concrete evidence which would lead to their guilt (or innocence). We have some police officers and district attorneys who intend to indict and get a guilty plea no matter what; and we have far too many criminals whose punishment in no way fits the crime. It is an absolute tragedy when God's Word is so absolutely clear and sets up a system of justice which is fair, consistent, simple and appropriate. The further we move away from this system the deeper we fall into a crime-ridden society.

This is the end of this section of Exodus 21, and I will complete this lesson with two addendum doctrines. We will see how Got Questions deals with the abortion question; and then we evaluate Jesus' words when He speaks about *an eye for an eye*. I have placed this [article](#) in the [Addendum](#).

Jesus also dealt with this passage, and that [brief exegesis](#) is also found in the [Addendum](#).

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In the previous verse, I pointed out how the *eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth* does not demand that this be taken ultra literally. These next two verses illustrate this fact. Let's say a slave owner knocks out the eye or a tooth of a slave, does this mean that the slave therefore knocks out his owner's eye (or tooth)? These two verses make it clear, that is *not* the case.

There is another important consideration—even though the slave is considered the property of his master, this did not give the master the freedom to treat his slave in any way he chooses. Not only were there limitations, but a master who causes his slave permanent damage could find himself without a slave.

**And when strikes a man an eye of his slave or an eye of his maidservant and he destroys her; and to the freedom he sends him forth in exchange for his eye. And if a tooth of his slave or a tooth of his maidservant he causes to fall, to the freedom he sends him forth in exchange for his tooth.**

Exodus  
21:26–27

**When a man strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his maidservant and he harms it, then he will send him out in freedom for the eye. And if he causes to fall the tooth of his slave or the tooth of his maidservant, he will send him forth in freedom for the tooth.**

**When the master strikes the eye of his slave or maidservant, and severely injures that eye, then the master must release the servant from slavery and give him (or her) his freedom. If he knocks out the tooth of a slave (or of a maidservant), then the master will set him (or her) free.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And when strikes a man an eye of his slave or an eye of his maidservant and he destroys her; and to the freedom he sends him forth in exchange for his eye. And if a tooth of his slave or a tooth of his maidservant he causes to fall, to the freedom he sends him forth in exchange for his tooth.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And if a man smite the eye of his servant or his handmaid and destroy it, he shall let him go free, for the sake of his eye. Or if he beat out (cause to fall) a tooth of his servant or a tooth of his handmaid, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And when a man strikes the eye of his Kenaanite servant or handmaid, and causeth blindness, he shall let him go free, on account of the eye. And if he strike out the tooth of his Kenaanite man or maid servant, he shall make the servant free on account of the tooth.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If any man strike the eye of his manservant or maidservant, and leave them but one eye, he shall let them go free for the eye which he put out. Also if he strike out a tooth of his manservant or maidservant, he shall in like manner make them free.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If a man strikes his servant's eye, or his maid's eye, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. If he strikes out his male servant's tooth, or his female servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And if a man strike the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, and injure it, he shall let him go free for his eyes sake. And if he knocks out the tooth of his manservant or the tooth of his maidservant, he must let him go free for his tooth's sake.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if one smite the eye of his man-servant, or the eye of his maid-servant, and put it out, he shall let them go free for their eye's sake. And if he should smite out the tooth of his man-servant, or the tooth of his maid-servant, he shall send them away free for their tooth's sake.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If a man gives his man-servant or his woman-servant a blow in the eye, causing its destruction, he is to let him go free on account of the damage to his eye. Or if the loss of a tooth is caused by his blow, he will let him go free on account of his tooth.
Easy English	'If a man hits the eye of a male or female slave, he may destroy the eye. Then he must let the slave go away free because of his bad eye. Perhaps a man may knock out the tooth of a male or female slave. Then he must let the slave go away free, because of his lost tooth.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	"If a man hits a slave in the eye, and the slave is blinded in that eye, then the slave will be allowed to go free. His eye is the payment for his freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave. If a master hits his slave in the mouth, and the slave

God's Word™	loses a tooth, then the slave will be allowed to go free. The slave's tooth is payment for the slave's freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave. "Whenever an owner hits his male or female slave in the eye and the slave is blinded, he must let the slave go free to make up for the loss of the eye. If the owner knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must let the slave go free to make up for the loss of the tooth.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"If someone hits his male or female slave in the eye and puts it out, he is to free the slave as payment for the eye. If he knocks out a tooth, he is to free the slave as payment for the tooth.
The Message	.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	"Suppose an owner hits a male or female slave in the eye and destroys it. Then the owner must let the slave go free to pay for the eye. Suppose an owner knocks out the tooth of a male or female slave. Then he must let the slave go free to pay for the tooth.
New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	If you hit one of your slaves and cause the loss of an eye, the slave must be set free. The same law applies if you knock out a slave's tooth--the slave goes free.
The Living Bible	"If a man hits his slave in the eye, whether man or woman, and the eye is blinded, then the slave shall go free because of his eye. And if a master knocks out his slave's tooth, he shall let him go free to pay for the tooth.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	.
New Living Translation	"If a man hits his male or female slave in the eye and the eye is blinded, he must let the slave go free to compensate for the eye. And if a man knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	If the owner of a slave strikes the eye of his male or female slave and that eye becomes blind, he must free that slave because of what he did to the slave's eye. If someone knocks out one of his slave's teeth, he must free the slave because of what he did to the slave's tooth.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'If anyone should hit their male or female slave in the eye and put it out, that slave should be set free because of the eye injury. And if he [breaks or knocks out] a male or female slave's tooth, that slave must be set free because of the tooth.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If anyone gives servant or handmaid a blow on the eye, so that the sight of it is lost, he must set them free in return for the sight he robbed them of; or if he knocks out a tooth, he must let servant or handmaid go free by the same title.
Translation for Translators	If the owner of a slave strikes the eye of his male or female slave and ruins it, he must free that slave because of <i>what he did to</i> the slave's eye. If someone knocks out one of his slave's teeth, he must free the slave because of <i>what he did to</i> the slave's tooth.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):



Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If a man strikes his manservant or maidservant in the eye, and the eye is ruined, then he will dismiss that person immediately to recompense him/her for the loss of the eye. If he knocks out his manservant's or maidservant's tooth, he will dismiss him to recompense him for the loss of the tooth. A deterrent against the physical abuse of a slave.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	' And if any man strikes his slave in the eye, so that his eye becomes blind, he shall let him go free instead of his eye. 'And if a tooth from his slave, so that the tooth is destroyed, in compensation he shall set him free, instead of his tooth.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant and destroys it, he is to release him as a free man in exchange for his eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his male [Lit. <i>male servant</i> ] or female servant, [Lit. <i>tooth of his female servant</i> ] he is to release him as a free man in exchange for his tooth.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And if someone smites the eye of their slave or the eye of their maid that it perishes, he shall let them go free for their eye's sake. And if he smites out his manslave's tooth or his maidslave's tooth, he shall let them go free for their tooth's sake.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	" 'And if a man strikes the eye of his male slave or the eye of his female slave and destroys it, he shall release him as free in place of his eye. And if he causes the tooth of his male slave or the tooth of his female slave to fall out, he will release him as free in place of his tooth.
NIV, ©2011	.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And which man shall strike the eye of his slave-man, or the eye of his slave-woman, and destroyed it, he will be set free, for his eye. And if the tooth of his slave-man or the tooth of his slave-woman he will make fall, he will be set free, for his tooth.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and the eye is lost, he will let the slave go free in compensation for the eye or if he knocks out a tooth he will likewise give the slave his freedom.
The Heritage Bible	And if a man strikes the eye of his manservant, or the eye of his maidservant, and it is ruined, he shall send him out free for his eye's sake. And if he causes his manservant's tooth to fall out, or his maidservant's tooth, he shall send him out free for his tooth's sake.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	.
New English Bible—1970	.
New Jerusalem Bible	'If anyone strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys the use of it, he will give the slave his freedom to compensate for the eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he will give the slave his freedom to compensate for the tooth.
New RSV	When a slaveowner strikes the eye of a male or female slave, destroying it, the owner shall let the slave go, a free person, to compensate for the eye. If the owner knocks out a tooth of a male or female slave, the slave shall be let go, a free person, to compensate for the tooth.
Revised English Bible—1989	.



**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	"If a person hits his male or female slave's eye and destroys it, he must let him go free in compensation for his eye. If he knocks out his male or female slave's tooth, he must let him go free in compensation for his tooth.
exeGesés companion Bible	And if a man smites the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it ruins; he sends him away liberated because of his eye. And if he fells the tooth of his servant or the tooth of his maid, he sends him away liberated because of his tooth.
Hebraic Roots Bible	.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.
Tree of Life Version	.

**Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:**

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Awful Scroll Bible	Was a man to strike the eye of his man servant, or the eye of his maidservant, even it is to have been destroyed, he was to let them loose, free, because of their eye. Was he to strike his man servant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth, he was to let them loose freed, for their tooth.
Charles Thomson OT Concordant Literal Version	.
	When a man smites the eye of his servant or the eye of his maidservant and ruins it he shall dismiss him free for his eye. And if he causes a tooth of his servant or a tooth of his maidservant to fall out he shall dismiss him free for his tooth.
Darby Translation	And if a man strike the eye of his bondman or the eye of his handmaid, and it be marred, he shall let him go for his eye. And if he knock out his bondman's tooth or his handmaid's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if an ish strike the ayin of his eved, or the ayin of his amah, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his ayin's sake. And if he strike his eved's shen (tooth), or his amah's shen; he shall let him go free for his shen's sake.
Rotherham's <i>Emphasized B.</i>	.
Third Millennium Bible	.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"If a man hits the eye of his male servant or female servant and it is destroyed, he must let the servant go free because of [the loss of] the eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male servant or female servant, he must let the servant go free because of [the loss of] the tooth.
The Expanded Bible	"If a man ·hits [strikes] his male or female slave in the eye, and ·the eye is blinded [·destroys it], the man is to free the slave to pay for the eye. If a master knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, the man is to free the slave to pay for the tooth.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. No distinction is made between deliberate cruelty and an unintentional blow, the effect alone being registered. And if he smite

out his man-servant's tooth or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. The loss, not only of some member of the body, but even of a single tooth, as a result of the master's treatment, entitled the slave to his freedom. So far as Christians are concerned, they know that they should not hurt nor harm their neighbor in his body. They will not insist upon any law of retaliation, as the granting of indemnities is a function of the government, but will keep in mind the Lord's admonition to kindness and placableness.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

If anyone hits one of his slaves (male or female) in the eye and blinds him in that eye, then the master is to free the slave to compensate for the loss of the eye. If anyone hits one of his slaves (male or female) and knocks out a tooth, then the master is to free the slave to compensate for the loss of the tooth.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

And if a man strikes the eye of his manservant or the eye of his maidservant and destroys it, he shall set him free in return for his eye,...

**the eye of his manservant:** [This refers to] a Canaanite, but a Hebrew [slave] does not go out with [the loss of his] tooth or [his] eye as we have stated on “she shall not go out as the slaves go out” (Exod. 21:7).

**in return for his eye:** And so it [the law] is with the twenty-four tips of limbs: [i.e.,] the fingers and toes, the two ears and the nose, and the *הַיִּגְגָּה שְׂאֵר*, which is the male organ. Why were [both] a tooth and an eye mentioned [when the Torah could have mentioned only one]? Because if it had mentioned an eye and did not mention a tooth, I would say that just as an eye was created with him [at birth], so [does this apply to] everything that is created with him, but a tooth was not created with him [at birth]. [Therefore, I would say that if the master knocked out his slave's tooth, the slave would not be freed.] If it mentioned a tooth and did not mention an eye, I would say [that] even [if the master knocked out] a baby tooth, which would be replaced [by the natural growth of another tooth, the slave would be freed]. Therefore, it mentions the eye [which cannot be replaced, to teach us that if the master knocks out a baby tooth, the slave is not freed]. -[From Kid. 24a]

...and if he knocks out the tooth of his manservant or the tooth of his maidservant, he shall set him free in return for his tooth.

Kaplan Translation

*Injury to Slaves*

If a person strikes his male or female slave in the eye and blinds it, he shall set [the slave] free in compensation for his eye. [Similarly,] if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must set [the slave] free in compensation for his tooth.

**slave**

A gentile bought as a slave (Mekhilta; Rashi).

**blinds it**

(see Bava Kama 98a; Yad, Avadim 5:8,9). Literally, 'and destroys it.'

NET Bible®

“If a man strikes the eye of his male servant or his female servant so that he destroys it,<sup>54</sup> he will let the servant<sup>55</sup> go free<sup>56</sup> as compensation for the eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his male servant or his female servant, he will let the servant<sup>57</sup> go free as compensation for the tooth.

<sup>54</sup>tn The form *וַיַּשִׁיחָהּ* (*v'yshikhatah*) is the Piel perfect with the vav (ו) consecutive, rendered “and destroys it.” The verb is a strong one, meaning “to ruin, completely destroy.”

<sup>55</sup>tn Heb “him”; the referent (the male or female servant) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>56</sup>sn Interestingly, the verb used here for “let him go” is the same verb throughout the first part of the book for “release” of the Israelites from slavery. Here, an Israelite will have to release the injured slave.

<sup>57tn</sup> Heb “him”; the referent (the male or female servant) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...(but) (if) a man will hit the eye of his servant, or the eye of his bondwoman, and he damages her, he will send him to freedom (in place of) his eye, and if the tooth of his servant, or the tooth of his bondwoman, is made to fall out, he will send him to freedom (in place of) his tooth,...
Charles Thomson OT	.
C. Thompson (updated) OT	But if a man smite the eye of a man servant, or the eye of a maid servant; and it become blind, he shall set them free for their eye's sake. And if he beat out the tooth of a man servant, or the tooth of a maid servant, he shall set them free for their tooth's sake.
Context Group Version	.
English Standard Version	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	If a man strikes the eye of his male servant or the eye of his female servant so that it is destroyed, then he must let him go free on account of his eye. If he knocks out his male servant's tooth or his female servant's tooth, then he shall let him <i>or her</i> go free on account of the tooth.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"And when a man strikes the eye of his man-servant, or the eye of his handmaid, and has destroyed it, as a freeman he does send him away for his eye; and if a tooth of his man-servant or a tooth of his handmaid he knock out, as a freeman he does send him away for his tooth.

**The gist of this passage:** If a master injures the eye of a slave or knocks a tooth out, that slave is to be given his or her freedom.

26-27

### Exodus 21:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## Exodus 21:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for</i> , <i>and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when</i> , <i>that</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>how</i> .			
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
ʾebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĠE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
ʾôw (וְ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
ʾâmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #519 BDB #51
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	<i>to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to spoil, to corrupt; to deal corruptly [with]; to act wickedly</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007

**Translation:** When a man strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his maidservant and he harms it,...

Here, we have a specific instance where a person's eye is harmed; and perhaps lost. In this example, the master does this to one of his slaves or one of his maidservants.

As has been the case earlier, we have no idea about any of the circumstances leading up to this. Those circumstances do not seem to be a mitigating factor.

Exodus 21:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
choph <sup>e</sup> shîy (חפשי) [pronounced <i>khof-SHEE</i> ]	<i>free [from slavery]; free [from taxes, obligations]</i>	adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2670 BDB #344
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
tachath (תחת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
‘ayin (עין) [pronounced <i>ĠAH-yin</i> ]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

**Translation:** ...then he will send him out in freedom for the eye.

You may recall that previously, the law was, *an eye for an eye*; or, *an eye in exchange for an eye*. Here, the exact same preposition is used. However, notice that what is being given in exchange is not the eye of the master, but the freedom of the person who was injured. Just as explained earlier, we are looking at a punishment or compensation which is equivalent to the injury; not the infliction of the exact same injury. Here, freedom is seen as a good exchange for harm coming to the eye of a slave.

Let me suggest a slightly different scenario. Let's say the slave here put himself into slavery in order to pay off some debts and perhaps even earn some money? What about him? Wouldn't sending him away would be adding insult to injury? The attitude of the slave is key in this passage. A person in voluntary slavery is not as likely to be a problem and, therefore, unlikely to be harmed by his master. In the very, very rare case that maybe this occurs, there might be a court case to decide.

Exodus 21:26 **When a man strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his maidservant and he harms it, then he will send him out in freedom for the eye.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Although this could be cleaned up somewhat by way of translation, the gist is easy to understand. Without a word to how the slave was procured, or without a word for or against slavery, the slave is manumitted when he is permanently disabled by his master.

## Exodus 21:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced <i>shayn</i> ]	<i>tooth [of man, lex talionis, beast], a sharp pointed rock; tine (of fork); ivory [= tooth of an elephant] [as material, of commerce]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>ĒB-ved</i> ]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
ʾôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced <i>shayn</i> ]	<i>tooth [of man, lex talionis, beast], a sharp pointed rock; tine (of fork); ivory [= tooth of an elephant] [as material, of commerce]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
ʾâmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced <i>aw-MAW</i> ]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #519 BDB #51
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to cast lots, to cause to fall, to be brought down; to let drop; to cause to fail; to lay down a request [petition] [before anyone]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656

BDB list of Hiphil meanings: *to cause to fall, fell, throw down, knock out, lay prostrate; to overthrow; to make the lot fall, assign by lot, apportion by lot; to let drop, cause to fail (figuratively); to cause to fall.*

**Translation:** And if he causes to fall the tooth of his slave or the tooth of his maidservant,...

The gist of v. 26 is repeated here, but with the tooth instead. We do not have to go through various parts of the body at this point; we simply apply the principle, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*. The infliction of the exact same injury is not the fair exchange that God is looking for.



Exodus 21:27b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
choph <sup>e</sup> shîy (חפשי) [pronounced <i>khof-SHEE</i> ]	<i>free [from slavery]; free [from taxes, obligations]</i>	adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2670 BDB #344
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
tachath (תחת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
shên (שן) [pronounced <i>shayn</i> ]	<i>tooth [of man, lex talionis, beast], a sharp pointed rock; tine (of fork); ivory [= tooth of an elephant] [as material, of commerce]</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042

**Translation:** ...he will send him forth in freedom for the tooth.

The master knocks a tooth out of the mouth of a servant, and he needs to set this servant free.

Again, the Bible is way ahead of its time, giving human rights to slaves.

We may not appreciate this, but these are real protections given to slaves, who are treated as real people; and certainly more than inanimate property. Obviously, similar rights are not afforded to animals.

Critics of the Bible often claim that Moses merely borrowed these laws from other cultures. However, I seriously doubt that equivalent laws from other cultures or countries were already in existence.

Exodus 21:27 *And if he causes to fall the tooth of his slave or the tooth of his maidservant, he will send him forth in freedom for the tooth.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:26–27 *When a man strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his maidservant and he harms it, then he will send him out in freedom for the eye. And if he causes to fall the tooth of his slave or the tooth of his maidservant, he will send him forth in freedom for the tooth.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

What is unusual here is the emphasis upon the rights of slaves. A slave in the ancient world was property. That is not the impact of these laws; God looks out for those in all social classes. What we have here is a master who does not deserve to have slaves because he maltreats them. He should not own slaves because he cannot control himself or them without resorting to violence. Today, this would be a company which knowingly endangers its employees (these would be risks that they employees are unaware of). Such a company does not deserve to have employees.

Let's look at slavery objectively, from the standpoint of the Bible. This is taken from the **Doctrine of Slavery** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). The doctrine below is not much different from the first doctrine found there; but there is much more to follow.

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Slavery

1. Slavery, as a human institution, is not specifically condemned in the Bible. No one in the Bible is ever told to leave their master; no one is told to lead some great revolt against the institution of slavery.
  - 1) In Genesis 24, it is clear that Abraham has great respect for this particular slave, to whom he entrusts with an extremely important mission.
  - 2) In Genesis 24:22–23 along with the reaction of Rebekah to the request of the servant of Abraham, that she does not look down on him or see him as an inferior in any way.
  - 3) The final quarter of Genesis is all about Joseph, who enters Egypt as a slave; and yet, rises up to the second highest position in Egypt by working hard, exercising intelligence, and making good, moral decisions.
  - 4) The book of Philemon deals with a slave that escaped from Philemon—Onesimus—who comes to Paul in prison, and who Paul sends back to Philemon, his master. Although Paul requests that Philemon set this slave free, he does not command it. The final decision is the master. This is found in the Epistle (letter) to Philemon.
  - 5) Jesus did not condemn slavery as an institution, even though He had the chance to on many occasions. See Matthew 8:5–10 10:24
2. Several great men in the Bible owned slaves. For example:
  - 1) Abraham in Genesis 24:35.
  - 2) Isaac in Genesis 26:13–14.
  - 3) Job in Job 19:15.
3. However, it is clear that slavery is not the ideal in God's eyes:
  - 1) The Hebrews were enslaved to Egypt and God told the pharaoh to let them leave.
  - 2) Paul suggested to Philemon that he free his slave Onesimus because they are both believers. Philemon 1:8–16
  - 3) When northern Israel defeated southern Israel (Judah) in a battle, they took 200,000 men, women and children, many of whom would become slaves. God sent a prophet to them and told them not to do this. 2Chronicles 28:8–11
  - 4) When listing those who are opposed to God and opposed to sound doctrine, Paul includes those who are *slave-traders* (also called *man-stealers*). This would indicate that there are clearly some illegitimate aspects of slavery which some slave traders practiced. This is the sort of slavery practiced in the early history of the United States. 1Timothy 1:10
4. There were a number of ways a person could become a slave in the ancient world:
  - 1) Foreign slaves could be captured in war. 1Samuel 4:9 17:9 2Chronicles 36:20 Ezra 9:7–9
    - (1) As an aside, a woman taken as a captive in war could also become the wife of a Hebrew. Deuteronomy 21:10–14
  - 2) Slaves could be purchased or given as a gift. Genesis 21:10 Exodus 12:44 21:2 Leviticus 25:44–46 Ecclesiastes 2:7.
  - 3) Joseph's own brothers threw him into a pit, and traveling Midianites found him and sold him to Ishmaelites who then sold him to the Egyptians. Genesis 37:23–24, 28
  - 4) One could enter into slavery or sell one's children into slavery because of debt. 2Kings 4:1
  - 5) Some men are born into slavery because their parents are slaves. Genesis 15:3 Exodus 21:4 Jeremiah 2:14.
  - 6) As restitution for crime, a person could commit himself to slavery. Exodus 22:3

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Slavery

- 7) A person could become a slave because of defaulting on his debts. Leviticus 25:14–28 2Kings 4:1
- 8) There was a form of slavery where a nation would be conquered and they would be taxed instead of being taken hostage and made slaves. 2Samuel 8:2, 6, 10–12 1Kings 4:21 2Chron. 17:11
- 9) One could become a slave by means of abduction, which the Bible teaches to be wrong. In fact, this illegal act could be punished by execution. Exodus 21:16 Deuteronomy 24:7 1Timothy 1:10
5. The point is, most of these ways that a person could become a slave are legitimate. The application of this institution could be sinful; but slavery, in itself, was not necessarily evil. In fact, a person with absolutely nothing could become a slave and eventually earn his freedom and walk away financially solvent. Some slaves were elevated from slavery to very high positions of authority and responsibility.
6. Just as owning a business today with hundreds or thousands of employees is seen as a good thing today, owning many slaves in the ancient world was considered a blessing from God. Genesis 24:35 26:13–14 Isaiah 14:1–3
7. God required that the Egyptians pay restitution to the Hebrew slaves for their years of labor. It should be noted that payment was made by slave-holders to the slaves themselves, and not many generations later. This is why reparations being called for by some liberal Black groups in the United States today is wrong. Exodus 3:22 11:2 12:35–36
8. The slaves of Hebrews often became believers in Jehovah Elohim. Genesis 24:52 Exodus 12:43–44
9. Slaves were to participate in some of the religious celebrations of Israel. Deuteronomy 12:18 16:10–11
10. A relative could redeem a slave from slavery. Leviticus 25:48–49
11. Slaves were supposed to be released in the Year of Jubilee (every 49<sup>th</sup> year). Leviticus 25:50–55
12. In the end times, even slaves would have God's Spirit poured out upon them. Therefore, spiritually, they were not seen as being inferior to anyone else. Joel 2:29
13. Slaves were entrusted with important tasks, material things and great responsibilities. In this way, slaves were not much different than a live-in employee. In the case of Joseph, he rose from being a slave to a great ruler in Egypt. Genesis 24 (see, for instance, v. 53) 39:1–6 Psalm 105:17–23
14. Therefore, if you envision a slave as someone who was followed around by someone with a whip who constantly beat the slave; and that this slave did only menial tasks, then you do not have a clear picture of slavery in the ancient world. Matthew 18:28–29 21:34–35 25:21–23
15. Quite obviously, many slaves did perform menial tasks as well. In some cases, this was their only function. Genesis 26:15, 19, 25, 32 Joshua 9:18–23 1Kings 9:21
16. However, a smart slave-owner would recognize potential and responsibility in his slaves, which is why Joseph could rise from being a slave to prime minister over Egypt. Genesis 39:1–6
17. Female slaves sometimes became the wives or mistresses of their masters or their master's sons. Genesis 16:1–4 30:1–18
18. The Mosaic Law provides protections for the slave.
  - 1) Hebrew slaves were enslaved only for 6 years and then they were to be freed. Exodus 21:2 Deuteronomy 15:12–15
  - 2) If another Hebrew becomes your slave as a result of their debt, you are not to treat them cruelly as a slave; but to work out a future time when they can be financially solvent and free. Leviticus 25:35–43

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Slavery

- 3) Such manumission occurred on other times as well. Jeremiah 34:8–10
- 4) A Hebrew slave could choose to remain a slave. Deuteronomy 15:16–18
- 5) If the master of a slave purchases a woman who becomes the slave's wife, he may remain with his wife in slavery. Exodus 21:3–6
- 6) Slaves were not to work on the Sabbath. Exodus 20:10 23:12
- 7) A slave-owner could not simply kill one of his slaves without retribution. Exodus 21:20
- 8) Under some circumstances of causing injury to a slave, the owner had to set the slave free. This is more an indictment of the slave-owner, rather than a reward to the slave. It is obvious that such a man should not own slaves. Exodus 21:26–27
- 9) If a woman taken in slavery was made a wife, and later on rejected, she would not simply return to being a slave. She had to be set free. Deuteronomy 21:10–14
19. These protections for slaves in Israel provide a great contrast between slaves in Israel and slaves in Egypt. Egyptians treated the Hebrews with great harshness in slavery. Exodus 1:10–14 3:7–9
20. In Jesus' time, slaves clearly had independent financial transactions from their masters as well as some freedom of movement. Matthew 18:28
21. Slavery is used as an illustration for our spiritual depravity before God. Because we are born with Adam's sin imputed to us, because we have a sin nature and because we sin personally against God, we are in the **slave market of sin**, unable to purchase our own freedom. Only Jesus Christ, from outside of the slave market can purchase (redeem) us. This is because He is born without a sin nature, without Adam's imputed sin, and He lived without committing personal sin. The Israelites freed from Egypt illustrate this redemption process. Exodus 13:3, 14 Deuteronomy 6:12 7:8 15:15
22. Slaves were a part of several of our Lord's parables:
  - 1) The parable of the sower. Matthew 13:18–30
  - 2) The slaves waiting for their master. Luke 2:37–48
  - 3) The man having the great supper sends out his slave with the invitations. Luke 14:16–24
  - 4) In the prodigal son parable, the slaves prepare for the return of the son. Luke 15:22
  - 5) The slaves being left with money with the intent that they invest this money. Luke 19:11–26
  - 6) The farmers who beat the slaves who come on behalf of their master for the fruit of the field. Luke 20:9–16
  - 7) This was not a complete listing of parables which featured slaves.
23. The human race is born into slavery, 1Corinthians 7:21-23. The unbeliever is a fourfold slave.
  - 1) The unbeliever is spiritually dead, a resident of the slave market of sin.
  - 2) We are born with Adam's sin imputed to us.
  - 3) As unbelievers, we are slaves to the old sin nature.
  - 4) The unbeliever is a slave to human viewpoint. Unless the unbeliever understands and accepts divine establishment thinking, they have no truth to counteract human viewpoint.
24. The believer can also become enslaved. Enslavement to the sin nature is basic soul slavery, Romans 6:20. Advanced soul slavery is reversionism, where the believer becomes indistinguishable from the unbeliever.
25. As believers, we ought to see ourselves as slaves to God. Paul and other communicators of God's Word saw themselves as slaves as well. Luke 1:38, 46–48 Luke 2:29 Acts 4:29 Romans 1:1 Galatians 1:10 Philip. 1:1
26. Jesus differentiates between believers who are slaves of God and believers who are friends of God. John 15:15
27. When a person becomes a believer, he should not look to suddenly change his status—even if he is a slave. 1Corinthians 7:17–23
28. There are no human distinctions which are carried over into the spiritual life, including being slave or being free. The idea is, a believer who is a slave is equal in the eyes of God to a believer who is free.

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Slavery

- 1Corinthians 12:13 Galatians 3:28 Colossians 3:11
29. Paul saw even himself as a slave to the Corinthians for their spiritual growth. 2Corinthians 4:5
30. Paul mandates the believers who are slaves obey their masters. Ephesians 6:5–8 Colossians 3:22–24 1Timothy 6:1–2 Titus 2:9–10
31. Similarly, masters were to treat their slaves justly. Colossians 4:1 Ephesians 6:9
32. By application, we can take much of what is said in the Bible about slaves and masters and apply this to employees and employers.
33. When Jesus became a man, He was taking upon himself the form of a slave. Philip. 2:7
34. So, like it or not, apart from abduction slavery, the Law of Moses sought to regulate slavery and to protect those who were slaves. The Bible did not seek to end slavery.

Slavery is not a dead institution; there are more slaves today than during the time when the United States had legal slavery. I always find it humorous to see radicals tear down confederate statues. If you have a real problem with slavery, there is a lot of it in the world. Why not deal with the real slavery today?

Let's say you went as a missionary to a place where slavery was prevalent, yet the slaves had enough freedom to come and go to church (or to a church-like meeting). What is most important? Do you, as a missionary, work to free those slaves (either within the law or by defying the unjust laws); or do you present the slaves with the gospel of Jesus Christ and teach them as much Bible doctrine as you are able to? In case this is not obvious, you do the latter. Missionaries are to teach truth. It is not their job to institute social change.

The missionary, the teacher of Bible doctrine, the **pastor-teacher**, the evangelist—it is the job of these men to present Jesus Christ to whomever will listen. If they are able to join onto some movement which seeks to eliminate slavery in some foreign country, that is not their place. Missionaries are not called by God to go into a country and *fix* it. In fact, for believers in general, it is not our job to whitewash the devil's world.

Now, this does not mean that the missionary is barred from all such activities. Let us consider two situations. Let's say that everything in that country appears to be moving away from slavery and that it is perhaps a matter of months before slavery is eliminated. The missionary certainly should not appear to be opposed to that sort of social change. And the last thing that you want is for former slaves to avoid you, saying, "So-and-so continued to support slavery." My point being, social issues can be very delicate.

I go to Berachah Church and Bobby (R. B. Thieme III) is very reticent to take a political stand on anything (even though his father had no problem doing so). Even though one major party is clearly anti-American, anti-Constitution and pro-socialist, Bobby refuses to clearly name the party and take a stand. This is a wise thing to do. We do not know the future. The United States, five years from now, could be even more socialist than we are now. We could turn into a one-party nation, where the federal government rules supreme. Is it the purpose of Berachah Church (or any **local church**) to fight against socialism or to lead a great movement against a reigning party? Absolutely not! Berachah Church should continue to be a beacon of light when it comes to the gospel and Bible doctrine.

Back to the topic at hand, slavery. Paul did speak to this in particular. When a slave came to him, Paul appealed to the slave's master to free him. This was a one-on-one individual request, not a social movement, and Paul was willing to accept whatever the master decided.

Some points were taken from <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/slavery.html>

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Exodus 21:26–27 **When the master strikes the eye of his slave or maidservant, and severely injures that eye, then the master must release the servant from slavery and give him (or her) his freedom. If he knocks out the tooth of a slave (or of a maidservant), then the master will set him (or her) free. (Kukis paraphrase)**



Regulations Concerning Livestock

Animal Control Laws

This next section of five verses will deal with an ox (or any animal) which harms or kills people.

One can certainly take the principles found here and tie them to modern-day factory recalls of dangerous cars or appliances or tools (or, whatever).

And when gores an ox a man or a woman and he has died, stoning is stoned the ox and will not be eaten his flesh; and an owner of the ox [is] acquitted. And if the ox [is] apt to gore him from yesterday three days ago and was declared with his owners, and he has not kept him [in], and has killed a man or a woman, the ox will be stoned and also the his owners will be executed. If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption of his soul as all which was laid upon him. If a son he gores or a daughter he gores, as the judgment the same will be done to him. If a slave gores the ox or a maidservant, silver of 30 shekels he will give to his adonai and the ox will be stoned.

Exodus  
21:28–32

When as ox gores a man or a woman and [that person] dies, the ox will surely be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox [will be] acquitted. However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently and [this] was declared to its owner, but he has not kept him [in and away from the public], and [the ox] kills a man or a woman, then the ox will be stoned and the owner executed. If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption for his life and all that was laid upon him. If [the ox] gores a son or a daughter, the same judgment will be done to him. If the ox gores a slave or a maidservant, then 30 shekels of silver will be given to the lord [of the servant] and the ox will be stoned.

If an ox gores a man or a woman and that person dies, then the ox will be destroyed and its flesh will not be eaten. However, the ox’s owner will not be held liable for the death. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring and the owner has been warned, then the ox will be destroyed and the owner executed. Now, if the owner pays a reasonable ransom for his life, then that will be considered sufficient. If the ox gores a son or daughter, the same judgment will be applied to him; and if the ox gore a male or female slave, the ransom of 30 shekels of silver will be required (and paid to the owner of the slave). Again, the ox will be destroyed.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And when gores an ox a man or a woman and he has died, stoning is stoned the ox and will not be eaten his flesh; and an owner of the ox [is] acquitted. And if the ox [is] apt to gore him from yesterday three days ago and was declared with his owners, and he has not kept him [in], and has killed a man or a woman, the ox will be stoned and also the his owners will be executed. If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption of his soul as all which was laid upon him. If a son he gores or a daughter he gores, as the judgment the same will be done to him. If a slave gores the ox or a maidservant, silver of 30 shekels he will give to his adonai and the ox will be stoned.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Jerusalem targum

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Targum (Onkelos)	If an ox gore a man or woman unto death, the ox being stoned shall be stoned, and his flesh must not be eaten; but the master of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox had gored in time before (yesterday and the day before), and it had been attested to his master, and he not keeping him he hath killed man or woman, the ox shall be stoned and the owner be put to death. If a fine of money <sup>[1]</sup> (if mammon) be laid upon him, he may give redemption for his life according to all that is laid upon him. If the ox gore a son or daughter of Israel, after this judgment shall it be done to him. If an ox gore a man servant or a maidservant, (the owner) shall give to his master thirty sileen of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And if an ox goreth a man or woman to cause death, the ox must be stoned, but shall not be killed that his flesh may be eaten; and the owner of the ox shall be exempt from the condemnation of death, and also from the price of the servant or handmaid. But if the ox (had been wont) to gore yesterday and before, and it had been attested before his owner three times, and he (had neglected) to restrain him, the ox, when he killeth man or woman, shall be stoned, and his master also shall die with a death sent upon him from heaven. Yet if a fine of money be laid upon him, he may give a ransom for his life, according to what shall be imposed on him by the sanhedrin of Israel. Whether the ox hath gored a son or a daughter of Israel, according to that judgment it shall be done to him. If an ox goreth a Kenaanite man servant or handmaid, the master of the man or woman servant shall give thirty sileen [Shekels] of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If an ox gore a man or a woman, and they die, he shall be stoned: and his flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox was wont to push with his horn yesterday and the day before, and they warned his master, and he did not shut him up, and he shall kill a man or a woman: then the ox shall be stoned, an his owner also shall be put to death. And if they set a price upon him, he shall give for his life whatsoever is laid upon him. If he have gored a son, or a daughter, he shall fall under the like sentence. If he assault a bondman or a bond woman, he shall give thirty sicles of silver to their master, and the ox shall be stoned.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.) . Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall not be held responsible. But if the bull had a habit of goring in the past, and it has been testified to its owner, and he has not kept it in, but it has killed a man or a woman, the bull shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death. If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid on him. Whether it has gored a son or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the bull gores a male servant or a female servant, thirty shekels of silver shall be given to their master, and the ox shall be stoned.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T. Plain English Aramaic Bible Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	. . If an ox gores a man or a woman that he or she die; then the ox shall be surely stoned and its meat shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be blameless. But if the ox were known to be in the habit of goring in the past, and its owner has been warned, and he has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. But if a sum of money is imposed on him, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatever they ask from him. Whether the ox has gored a son or a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a manservant or a maidservant, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if a bull gore a man or woman and they die, the bull shall be stoned with stones, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall be clear. But if the bull should have been given to goring in former time, and men should have

told his owner, and he have not removed him, but he should have slain a man or woman, the bull shall be stoned, and his owner shall die also. And if a ransom should be imposed on him, he shall pay for the ransom of his soul as much as they shall lay upon him. And if the bull gore a son or daughter, let them do to him according to this ordinance. And if the bull gore a man-servant or maid-servant, he shall pay to their master thirty silver didrachms, and the bull shall be stoned.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

If an ox comes to be the cause of death to a man or a woman, the ox is to be stoned, and its flesh may not be used for food; but the owner will not be judged responsible. But if the ox has frequently done such damage in the past, and the owner has had word of it and has not kept it under control, so that it has been the cause of the death of a man or woman, not only is the ox to be stoned, but its owner is to be put to death. If a price is put on his life, let him make payment of whatever price is fixed. If the death of a son or of a daughter has been caused, the punishment is to be in agreement with this rule. If the death of a man-servant or of a woman-servant is caused by the ox, the owner is to give their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox is to be stoned.

Easy English

Perhaps a male cow may attack a person and kill him. Then you must throw stones at the male cow until it dies. You must not eat the meat from that male cow. But do not punish the master of the male cow. But perhaps that male cow has attacked people before. Perhaps someone has told his master about this, but the man has not listened. He has not kept the male cow in a safe place and the animal has killed a person. Then you must throw stones at the animal but you must also kill his master. But if the dead person's family demands money, the man can give money instead of his life. This law is true if the male cow attacks a son or a daughter. If it attacks a male or female slave, the animal's master must pay 30 silver coins. He must give it to the slave's master and he must kill the animal.

Easy-to-Read Version–2001

Easy-to-Read Version–2006

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“If a man’s bull kills a man or woman, then you should use stones and kill that bull. You should not eat the bull. The owner of the bull is not guilty. But if the bull had hurt people in the past, and if the owner was warned, then the owner is guilty. That is because he did not keep the bull tied or locked in its place. So if the bull is allowed to be free and kills someone, the owner is guilty. You should kill the bull with stones and also kill the owner. But the family of the dead man may accept money. If they accept money, the man who owned the bull should not be killed. But he must pay as much money as the judge decides.

“This same law must be followed if the bull kills someone’s son or daughter. But if the bull kills a slave, the owner of the animal must pay the master 30 pieces of silver. [The price for a new slave.] And the bull must also be killed with stones. This law will be the same for men and women slaves.

God’s Word™

“Whenever a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat may not be eaten. The bull’s owner is free from any liability. But if the bull has had the habit of goring, and the owner has been warned but has not kept it confined, and it kills a man or a woman, then the bull must be stoned and its owner must be put to death, too. However, if only a cash settlement is demanded from the owner, the bull’s owner may save his life by paying whatever price is demanded of him. If the bull gores someone’s son or daughter, this same ruling applies. If the bull gores a male or female slave, its owner must pay 12 ounces of silver to the slave’s master, and the bull must be stoned.

Good News Bible (TEV)

The Responsibility of Owners

"If a bull gores someone to death, it is to be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but its owner is not to be punished. But if the bull had been in the habit of attacking people and its owner had been warned, but did not keep it penned up—then if it gores someone to death, it is to be stoned, and its owner is to be put to death also. However, if the owner is allowed to pay a fine to save his life, he must pay the full amount required. If the bull kills a boy or a girl, the same rule applies. If the bull kills a male or female slave, its owner shall pay the owner of the slave thirty pieces of silver, and the bull shall be stoned to death.

*The Message*  
Names of God Bible  
NIRV

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"Suppose a bull kills a man or woman with its horns. Then you must kill the bull by throwing stones at it. Its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held accountable. But suppose the bull has had the habit of attacking people. And suppose the owner has been warned but has not kept it fenced in. Then if it kills a man or woman, you must kill it with stones. The owner must also be put to death. But suppose payment is required of him instead. Then the owner can save his life by paying what is required. The same law applies if the bull wounds a son or daughter with its horns. Suppose the bull wounds a male or female slave. Then the owner must pay the slave's master about 12 ounces of silver. You must kill the bull with stones.

New Simplified Bible

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible  
College Press Bible Study  
Contemporary English V.

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A bull that kills someone with its horns must be killed and its meat destroyed, but the owner of the bull isn't responsible for the death. Suppose you own a bull that has been in the habit of attacking people, but you have refused to keep it fenced in. If that bull kills someone, both you and the bull must be put to death by stoning. However, you may save your own life by paying whatever fine is demanded. This same law applies if the bull gores someone's son or daughter. If the bull kills a slave, you must pay the slave owner thirty pieces of silver for the loss of the slave, and the bull must be killed by stoning.

The Living Bible

"If an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox shall be stoned and its flesh not eaten, but the owner shall not be held— unless the ox was known to gore people in the past, and the owner had been notified and still the ox was not kept under control; in that case, if it kills someone, the ox shall be stoned and the owner also shall be killed. But the dead man's relatives may accept a fine instead, if they wish. The judges will determine the amount. Literally, v. 30 reads: "But if a ransom is laid upon him, he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid upon him."  
"The same law holds if the ox gores a boy or a girl. But if the ox gores a slave, whether male or female, the slave's master shall be given thirty pieces of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

New Berkeley Version  
New Life Version

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**Laws about Owning Animals**

"When a bull kills a man or a woman with its horns, the bull will be killed with stones. And its flesh will not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be punished. But if a bull has tried to kill with its horns before, and the owner has been told but does not keep him shut up, and the bull kills a man or a woman, the bull will be killed with stones and the owner will be put to death. But if he is allowed to pay for his life, then he will pay whatever is asked of him. If the bull kills a son or a daughter, it will be punished by the same law. If the bull kills a male or female servant, the bull's owner

	will give the servant's owner thirty pieces of silver. And the bull will be killed with stones.
New Living Translation	"If an ox [Or <i>bull</i> , or <i>cow</i> ; also in 21:29-36.] gores a man or woman to death, the ox must be stoned, and its flesh may not be eaten. In such a case, however, the owner will not be held liable. But suppose the ox had a reputation for goring, and the owner had been informed but failed to keep it under control. If the ox then kills someone, it must be stoned, and the owner must also be put to death. However, the dead person's relatives may accept payment to compensate for the loss of life. The owner of the ox may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded. "The same regulation applies if the ox gores a boy or a girl. But if the ox gores a slave, either male or female, the animal's owner must pay the slave's owner thirty silver coins, [Hebrew <i>30 shekels of silver</i> , about 12 ounces or 342 grams in weight.] and the ox must be stoned.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'If a bull gores a man or a woman and he or she dies, the bull must be stoned to death and its flesh may not be eaten... however, the bull's owner will be [free of guilt]. But if the bull has been known to gore before and the owner was told and hasn't done anything about it, and then it kills a man or woman; the bull must be stoned and its owner must also die. However, if a ransom is demanded instead, he must pay whatever is asked for his life. 'If a bull gores someone's son or daughter; it must be handled according to the law that was given. But if the bull gores a male or female slave; their master must be paid thirty double-silver coins, and the bull must be stoned.
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	<b>Instructions about animals and property</b> When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox should be stoned to death, and the meat of the ox shouldn't be eaten. But the owner of the ox shouldn't be punished. However, if the ox had gored people in the past and its owner had been warned but didn't watch out for it, and the ox ends up killing a man or a woman, then the ox should be stoned to death, and its owner should also be put to death. If the owner has to pay compensation instead, he must pay the agreed amount to save his life. If the ox gores a boy or a girl, this same case law applies to the owner. If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner will pay thirty silver shekels to the slave's owner, and the ox will be stoned to death.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If an ox gores a man or woman to death, it shall be stoned, and the flesh of it is not to be eaten. But the owner of the ox shall be held innocent, unless the ox has been using its horns for some time past, and he has refused to shut it away when appeal was made to him. Then, if the ox gores man or woman, it shall be stoned, and he too shall be put to death, unless a fine is imposed on him instead; if so, he shall pay whatever ransom is demanded for his life. The parents shall have the same claim upon him, whether it be a son or daughter of theirs the ox has gored; if it has attacked man-servant or woman-servant, the owner must pay thirty silver pieces, and the ox must be stoned.
Translation for Translators	If a bull gores a man or woman with the result that the person dies, you <i>must kill the bull</i> by throwing stones at it, but you must not punish the owner of the bull. But suppose the bull had attacked people several times before, and its owner had been warned, but he did not keep the bull inside a fence. Then you <i>must kill the bull</i> by throwing stones at it, but you must also execute its owner. However, if the owner of the bull is allowed to pay a fine «to save his own life/in order not to be executed», he must pay the full amount that the judges say that he must pay. If someone's bull

attacks and gores another person's son or daughter, you must treat the bull's owner according to that same rule. If a bull attacks and gores a male or female slave, its owner must pay to the slave's owner thirty pieces of silver. Then you must *kill the bull by* throwing stones at it.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox is to be stoned to death, and his flesh not eaten. The owner of the ox will be acquitted. But if the ox had been known to threaten to gore others in the past [Literally, "three days from yesterday." This law makes a man responsible for injuries or deaths that his livestock cause, when he has good reason to suspect that any of his livestock might present a public danger or nuisance.], and if that fact has been made known to the owner, and the owner did not keep the ox in, and then let the ox kill a man or a woman, the ox will be stoned, and moreover the owner will be executed. If instead a ransom is imposed on him, he will ransom his life by paying the full sum demanded. Whether the ox gores a son or a daughter, this will be done to him according to custom. If the ox threatens a manservant or maidservant with a goring motion, the owner will pay the servant's master thirty silver shekels, and the ox is to be stoned.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And if a bullock butts a man and the man dies, you shall stone the bullock, and not eat of its flesh, but destroy the bullock for nothing. But if the bullock were accustomed to butt formerly, and his owner knew it, and did not guard it, and it kills a man, or a woman, the, bulloclr shall be stoned and the owner put to death. But if a fine is laid upon him, he shall pay it, and his life be free from all, because of the fine laid upon him. Whether a man or a woman is butted, it shall be done according to this decree. ' If a slave man or woman is butted by an bullock, thirty shekels of silver shall be given to their master, and the bullock be stoned.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	If an ox gores a man or a woman that they die, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox <i>shall be</i> absolved. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past and it has been testified to his owner, and he has not kept him in, but that he has killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there is laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatever is laid upon him. Whether it has gored a son or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall gore a manslave or a maidslave, he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"If a bull gores a man or woman to death, the bull is to be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull is to be stoned and its owner also is to be put to death. However, if payment is demanded, the owner may redeem his life by the payment of whatever is demanded. This law also applies if the bull gores a son or daughter. If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels [That is, about 12 ounces or about 345 grams] of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull is to be stoned to death.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.



Unlocked Literal Bible  
Urim-Thummim Version

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If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, then the ox will certainly be stoned, and his flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be exempt. But if the ox was addicted to goring with its horns in times past and the owner was notified but he has not kept it fenced in, and it has killed a man or a woman, the ox will be stoned and the owner also will be executed. If a ransom is required of him, then he will give for this ransom of his life whatever is demanded of him. Whether he has gored a son or daughter, it will be done to him according to this ordinance. If the ox will gore a male or female slave, he will give to their master 30 shekels of silver and the ox will be stoned.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And if an ox will gore a man or a woman, and died, with stones the ox will be stoned, and his meat will not be eaten, and the owner of the ox is absolved. And if an ox is a gorer since yesterday and the day before, and it was testified to his owner, and he did not guard him, and it killed a man or a woman, the bull will be stoned, and also its owner will be put to death. If a ransom, is sent to him, and he gave as the redemption of his soul, as all that is sent to him. Whether a son is gored, or a daughter is gored, as this judgment will be done to him. If the ox will gore a slave-man or a slave-woman, thirty shekels of silver will he give to his master, and the bull will be stoned.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) When an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox will be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will not be punished. If the ox had gored someone in the past and its owner had been warned but had not kept it fenced in, and if later it kills a man or woman, the ox will be stoned and its owner put to death. If the owner, however, is allowed to pay a fine to save his life, he must pay all that is demanded. If the ox gores a boy or a girl the same law applies. If the ox gores a man or woman slave, the owner of the slave shall be paid thirty pieces of silver and the ox will be stoned.

The Heritage Bible

If an ox butts a man or a woman with his horns, and they die, then the ox, being stoned, shall be stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; and the lord of the ox shall be innocent. And if the ox were in the habit of butting in time past, and it has been testified to his lord, and he has not hedged him in, and he has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and his lord also shall be put to death. If there is placed on him an amount to cover, then he shall give for the ransom of his soul all that is placed upon him. Whether he has butted a son or have butted a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox shall butt a manservant or a maidservant, he shall give to their lord thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

New American Bible (2002)

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New American Bible (2011)

When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be stoned; its meat may not be eaten. The owner of the ox, however, shall be free of blame. But if an ox was previously in the habit of goring people and its owner, though warned, would not watch it; should it then kill a man or a woman, not only must the ox be stoned, but its owner also must be put to death. If, however, a fine is imposed on him, he must pay in ransom\* for his life whatever amount is imposed on him. This ordinance applies if it is a boy or a girl that the ox gores. But if it is a male or a female slave that it gores, he must pay the owner of the slave thirty shekels of silver, and the ox must be stoned.

New English Bible—1970

### ***Incidents involving domestic animals.***

When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh may not be eaten ; the owner of the ox shall be free from liability. If, however, the ox has for some time past been a vicious animal, and the owner has been duly



warned but has not kept it under control, and the ox kills a man or a woman, then the ox shall be stoned, and the owner shall be put to death as well. If, however, the penalty is commuted for a money payment, he shall pay in redemption of his life whatever is imposed upon him, If the ox gores a son or a daughter, the same rule shall apply. If the ox gores a slave or slave-girl, its owner shall pay thirty shekels of silver to their master, and the ox shall be stoned.

New Jerusalem Bible

'If an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox will be stoned and its meat will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will not be liable. But if the ox has been in the habit of goring before, and if its owner has been warned but has not kept it under control, then should this ox kill a man or woman, it will be stoned and its owner put to death. If a ransom is imposed on the owner, he will pay whatever is imposed, to redeem his life. If the ox gores a boy or a girl, it will be treated in accordance with this same rule. If the ox gores a slave, male or female, its owner will pay the price -- thirty shekels -- to their master, and the ox will be stoned.

New RSV

Revised English Bible--1989

### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible

"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox is to be stoned and its flesh not eaten, but the owner of the ox will have no further liability. However, if the ox was in the habit of goring in the past, and the owner was warned but did not confine it, so that it ended up killing a man or a woman; then the ox is to be stoned, and its owner too is to be put to death. However, a ransom may be imposed on him; and the death penalty will be commuted if he pays the amount imposed. If the ox gores a son or daughter, the same rule applies. If the ox gores a male or female slave, its owner must give their master twelve ounces of silver; and the ox is to be stoned to death.

exeGesés companion Bible

If an ox butt a man or a woman so that they die,  
then in stoning, stone the ox  
and eat not his flesh;  
but exonerate the master of the ox.  
But if the ox butted with his horn three yesters ago  
and it was witnessed to his master  
and he guards him not,  
and deathifies a man or a woman,  
stone the ox and deathify his master also.  
If a koper/an atonement is set on him,  
then he gives whatever is set on him  
to redeem his soul.  
If he butts a son or butts a daughter,  
work to him according to this judgment.  
If the ox butts a servant or a maid;  
he gives their adoni thirty shekels of silver  
and stones the ox.

Hebraic Roots Bible

And when an ox gores a man so that he dies, the ox stoning shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, and the owner of the ox is innocent. And if he was an ox apt to gore from yesterday and the third day, and its owner is given warning, and he does not watch him, and he kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be killed. If a ransom is put on him, he shall give the redemption of his life, according to all which is put on him. Whether he gores a son or he gores a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male slave or a slave-girl, he shall give thirty silver shekels to his master, and the ox shall be stoned.

## Israeli Authorized Version

If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox were wont to push with his shofar in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

The Israel Bible (beta)  
JPS (Tanakh—1985)  
Kaplan Translation  
*The Scriptures* 1998

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“And when an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall certainly be stoned, and its flesh is not eaten, and the owner of the ox is innocent.  
“However, if the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox is stoned and its owner also is put to death.  
“If a sin-covering is laid upon him, then he shall give the ransom of his life, whatever is laid on him.  
“Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this right-ruling it is done to him.  
“If the ox gores a male or female servant, he is to give to their master thirty sheqels of silver, and the ox is stoned.

## Tree of Life Version

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**Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:**

Alpha & Omega Bible  
Awful Scroll Bible

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Was a plowing beast to gore a man or woman, even are they to have died, the plowing beast as to being stoned was to be stoned - was its flesh to be eaten? The owner of the plowing beast is to be cleared. Is the plowing beast apt to gore formerly, as three days ago, even it is to have been reiterated to the owner - was he to retain him? - it is to have killed a man or a woman. The plowing beast is to be stoned, and the owner was to be put to death. Was there to be fixed a covering up for him, he is to have requited the ransom for his breath, of that fixed. Was it to gore a son, or was it to gore a daughter, in this manner it was to be done. Was a plowing beast to gore a man servant or a maidservant, it was requited of its master thirty shekels of silver, and the plowing beast was to be stoned.

Charles Thomson OT  
Concordant Literal Version

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When a bull gores a man or a woman and he dies, the bull shall be stoned, yea stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, yet the possessor of the bull shall be held innocent. But if it was a bull given to goring heretofore, and it was testified to its possessor, yet he did not keep it in, and it caused a man or a woman to die, the bull, it shall be stoned, and, moreover, its possessor, he shall be put to death. If a sheltering ransom is imposed on him then he will give as a ransom for his soul according to all which is set on him. Whether it gores a son or gores a daughter, according to this custom shall it be done to him. If the bull gores a servant or a maidservant, thirty shekels of silver shall he give to his lord, and the bull, it shall be stoned.

## Darby Translation

And if an ox gore a man or a woman, so that they die, then the ox shall certainly be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be guiltless. But if the ox have gored heretofore, and it have been testified to its owner, and he have not kept it in, and it kill a man or a woman, --the ox shall be stoned, and its

owner also shall be put to death. If there be imposed on him a satisfaction, then he shall give the ransom of his life, according to what is imposed on him. Whether it gore a son or gore a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done to him. If the ox gore a bondman or a handmaid, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

exeGeses companion Bible  
Orthodox Jewish Bible

If an ox gore an ish or an isha, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his basar shall not be eaten; but the ba'al hashor (owner of the ox) shall be exempt from punishment.

But if the shor habitually from mitmol (yesterday) gored, and its ba'al has been warned, and he hath not kept it in the bull pen, and it hath killed an ish or an isha; the shor shall be stoned, and his ba'al also shall be put to death.

If there be laid on him a kofer (atonement payment, ransom), then he shall give for the redemption of his nefesh whatsoever is assessed upon him.

Whether he have gored a ben, or have gored a bat, according to this mishpat shall it be done unto him.

If the ox shall gore an eved or an amah; he shall give unto their adon sheloshim shekalim kesef, and the ox shall be stoned.

Rotherham's *Emphasized B.*

And when an ox goreth a man or a woman, and death ensueth, the ox shall, surely be stoned and his flesh shall not be eaten, and the owner of the ox, shall be quit. But, if, the ox, was wont to gore before that time and it hath been attested to his owner, and he hath not proceeded to put him under guard, and he causeth the death of man or woman, the ox, shall be stoned, and, his owner also, shall be put to death. If, a sin-covering, be laid on him, then shall he give a ransom for his life, according to whatsoever may be laid on him: if, a son, he gore or, a daughter, he gore, according to this regulation, shall it be done to him; if, a servant the ox gore, or a handmaid, thirty shekels of silver, shall he give to his lord, and, the ox, shall be stoned.

Third Millennium Bible

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be stoned and its meat shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be cleared [of responsibility]. But if the ox has tried to gore on a previous occasion, and its owner has been warned, but has not kept it confined and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall be put to death as well. If a ransom is demanded of him [in return for his life], then he shall give whatever is demanded for the redemption of his life. If the ox has gored another's son or daughter, he shall be dealt with according to this same rule. If the ox gores a male or a female servant, the owner shall give to the servant's master thirty shekels of silver [the purchase price for a slave], and the ox shall be stoned.

The Expanded Bible

"If a man's ·bull [ox] kills a man or woman, you must kill that bull by ·throwing stones at [stoning] it, and you should not eat ·the bull [<sup>1</sup>its meat]. But the owner of the bull is ·not guilty [innocent]. However, suppose the ·bull [ox] has ·hurt [gored] people in the past and the owner, though warned, did not ·keep it in a pen [restrain/confine it]. Then if it kills a man or woman, the ·bull [ox] must be stoned to death, and the owner must also be put to death. But if ·the family of the dead person accepts money [<sup>1</sup>a ransom is imposed on him], the owner of the bull must pay whatever is demanded ·to buy back his life [for his redemption]. Use this same ·law [rule] if the ·bull [ox] ·kills [gores] a person's son or daughter. If the ·bull [ox] ·kills [gores] a male or female slave, the owner must pay the master ·the price for a new slave, or twelve ounces [<sup>1</sup>thirty shekels] of silver, and the ·bull [ox] must also be stoned to death.

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

### Verses 28-36

Ordinances for the Protection of Life and Property

If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten, be considered unclean; but the owner of the ox shall be quit, shall be considered and declared innocent of any wrongdoing. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, if the owner was fully aware that the ox was in the habit of attacking people, that he was of a mean disposition, and yet did not confine him, but that he hath killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death, because he, by his neglect in watching the vicious animal, became the cause of the deaths. There was a possibility, however, of a man's saving his life in such a case. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him, as a punishment for his criminal carelessness. Whether he have gored a son or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. The law was justly strict and made no distinction between men and women; it was a case of paying the price of ransom or the penalty of death. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maid-servant, the injury resulting in death, he, the owner of the vicious brute, shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, probably the usual market price of a slave, and the ox shall be stoned. Thus we also, in passing judgment upon any trespass, distinguish between sins of weakness and sins of malice, between transgressions by neglect, by mistake, and by criminal intent, being very careful not to accuse anyone unjustly.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

If a bull gores a man or woman *and the injury leads to the victim's death*, then the bull must be *put to death by stoning*. No one is allowed to eat the bull meat, and the owner of the bull has no further liability. But if a bull has gored *people* before and its owner is aware of the problem but has not confined it, and if that bull kills a man or woman, then the bull must be stoned and the owner must also be put to death. *There is an exception*. If the relatives of the dead demand money *instead of his life*, then the owner of the bull may redeem his life in exchange for whatever is required of him. The same rule applies whether the bull gores someone's son or daughter. If the bull gores a slave (male or female), then the owner *of the bull* is to give the dead slave's master 12 ounces of silver, and the bull must be stoned.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach

And if a bull gores a man or a woman and [that one] dies, the bull shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, and the owner of the bull is clear.

**And if a bull gores:** [This law refers to] either a bull or any domestic animal, beast, or bird, but the text spoke of what usually occurs [i.e., bulls usually gore].  
-[From Mechilta, B.K. 54b]

**and its flesh shall not be eaten:** From the implication of what was stated: “the bull shall surely be stoned,” do I not know that it will become carrion [i.e., meaning not killed according to halachah], and carrion is forbidden to be eaten. For what purpose, then, does the Torah state: “and its flesh shall not be eaten”? [To inform us] that even if one slaughtered it [according to halachah] after it was sentenced, it is forbidden to be eaten. How do we know that no benefit may be derived from it [this animal sentenced to death]? Therefore, the Torah says: “and the owner of the bull is clean (יָקֵן)”, as one says to his friend, “So-and-so lost his property [lit., was cleaned out (יָקֵן) of his property], and he has no benefit at all from it” (B.K. 41a). This is its midrashic meaning. Its simple meaning is as its apparent meaning. Since it says concerning a habitual gorer: “and also its owner shall be put to death,” it had to say that in the case of a tame [bull]: “and the owner of the bull is clean [i.e., clear of any charges].” [The tame bull (קָרָךְ) is the bull that did not gore habitually, but only once or twice. In the case of the bull that killed a person, this bull is put to death, but the owner is clear; i.e., he does not have to pay ransom. Should the bull gore three times, it is called דָּעוּמָה, warned. If the fourth time it gores it kills someone, it is liable to death, and its owner is also liable to death by the hands of Heaven. In order to clear himself of this punishment he must pay ransom, as is delineated in verses 29 and 30.]

But if it is a [habitually] goring bull since yesterday and the day before yesterday, and its owner had been warned, but he did not guard it, and it puts to death a man or a woman, the bull shall be stoned, and also its owner shall be put to death,...

**since yesterday and the day before yesterday:** This implies [a total of] three gorings. [From Mechilta, B.K. 23b]

**and its owner has been warned:** Heb. דָּעוּמָה, a word denoting a warning in front of witnesses (Mechilta, B.K. 24a), like “The man warned us repeatedly (דָּעָה דָּעָה)” (Gen. 43:3).

**and it puts to death a man, etc.:** Since it stated: “if [a bull] gores,” I know only that [the bull is liable to death] if it kills him [its victim] by goring [with its horns]. If it killed him through biting, shoving, or kicking, how do we know [that it must be killed]? Therefore, the Torah states: “and it puts to death,” [implying that in whatever way it kills its victim, the bull is liable to death]. -[based on Mechilta]

**and also its owner shall be put to death:** By the hands of Heaven [and not through a court]. I might think that it [this verse] means [that he is liable to death] by the hands of man [i.e., through the court]. Therefore, the Torah states: “The assailant shall surely be put to death; he is a murderer” (Num. 35:21), [implying that] for his [act of] murder you [must] kill him, but you do not kill him [i.e., anyone] for his bull's [act of] murder. -[From Sanh. 15b]

...insofar as ransom shall be levied upon him, he shall give the redemption of his soul according to all that is levied upon him.

**insofar as ransom shall be levied upon him:** Heb. (אֲדָמָה). This (אֲדָמָה) is not [meant as a] conditional, but it is like “When (אֲדָמָה) you lend money” (Exod.22:24), a word meaning “that.” His sentence is that the court levy ransom upon him.

**he shall give the redemption of his soul:** [This means] the value of the victim [as a slave]. This is the view of Rabbi Ishmael. Rabbi Akiva says: The value of the damager, [i.e., the owner of the goring bull]. -[From Mechilta]

Or if it gores a young boy or a young girl, according to this ordinance shall be done to him.

**Or if it gores a young boy:** Heb. בֶּן, lit., a son A son who is a minor.



**or a young girl:** Heb. תַּב, lit., a daughter who is a minor. Since it says (verse 29): “and it puts to death a man or a woman,” I may think that he (the bull) is liable only for [killing] adults. Therefore, the Torah states: “Or if it gores a young boy, etc.” to make one liable for minors as [for] adults. -[From Mechilta, Mechilta d’Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, B.K. 43b, 44a]

If the bull gores a manservant or a maidservant, he shall give silver [in the amount of] thirty shekels to his master, and the bull shall be stoned.

**...a manservant or a maidservant -:** Canaanites. -[From Mechilta]

**thirty shekels:** This is a decree of the Scriptures [that the bull’s owner pay thirty shekels] whether he [the dead slave] was worth a thousand zuz or whether he was worth no more than a dinar. The weight of the shekel is four pieces of gold, which equal half an ounce according to the official weight of Cologne.

Kaplan Translation

### *The Killer Ox*

If an ox gores a man or woman, and [the victim] dies, the ox must be stoned to death, and its flesh may not be eaten. The owner of the ox, however, shall not be punished. But if the ox was in the habit of goring on previous occasions, and the owner was warned but did not take precautions, then, if it kills a man or woman, the ox must be stoned, and its owner shall also [deserve to] die. Nevertheless, an atonement fine must be imposed on him, and he must pay whatever is imposed on him as a redemption for his life. This law also applies if [the ox] gores a minor boy or a minor girl. If the ox gores a male or female slave, [its owner] must give thirty silver shekels to [the slave's] master, and the bull must be stoned.

### **ox**

Any bovine animal.

### **deserve to die**

By God's hand (Mekhilta; Rashi).

### **Nevertheless**

(Rashi; Bava Kama 40a; Yad, Nizkey Mamon 10:4). Literally, 'if.' Cf. Numbers 35:31.

### **thirty silver shekels**

Around \$30.

### *Laws about Animals*

<sup>58</sup>“If an ox<sup>59</sup> gores a man or a woman so that either dies,<sup>60</sup> then the ox must surely<sup>61</sup> be stoned and its flesh must not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. But if the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner was warned,<sup>62</sup> and he did not take the necessary precautions,<sup>63</sup> and then it killed a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned and the man must be put to death. If a ransom is set for him,<sup>64</sup> then he must pay the redemption for his life according to whatever amount was set for him. If the ox<sup>65</sup> gores a son or a daughter, the owner<sup>66</sup> will be dealt with according to this rule.<sup>67</sup> If the ox gores a male servant or a female servant, the owner<sup>68</sup> must pay thirty shekels of silver,<sup>69</sup> and the ox must be stoned.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>58sn</sup> The point that this section of the laws makes is that one must ensure the safety of others by controlling the circumstances.

<sup>59tn</sup> Traditionally “ox,” but “bull” would also be suitable. The term may refer to one of any variety of large cattle.

<sup>60tn</sup> Heb “and he dies”; KJV “that they die”; NAB, NASB “to death.”

<sup>61tn</sup> The text uses לָקַטְי לִוְקַטְי (saqol yissaqel), a Qal infinitive absolute with a Niphal imperfect. The infinitive intensifies the imperfect, which here has an obligatory nuance or is a future of instruction.

<sup>62tn</sup> The Hophal perfect has the idea of “attested, testified against.”

<sup>63tn</sup> Heb “he was not keeping it” or perhaps guarding or watching it (referring to the ox).

<sup>64sn</sup> The family of the victim would set the amount for the ransom of the man guilty of criminal neglect. This practice was common in the ancient world, rare in Israel. If the family allowed the substitute price, then the man would be able to redeem his life.

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<sup>65tn</sup> Heb “it”; the referent (the ox) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>66tn</sup> Heb “he”; the referent (the owner) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>67tn</sup> Heb “according to this judgment it shall be done to him.”

<sup>68tn</sup> Heb “he”; the referent (the owner) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>69sn</sup> A shekel was a unit for measure by means of a scale. Both the weight and the value of a shekel of silver are hard to determine. “Though there is no certainty, the shekel is said to weigh about 11,5 grams” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:181). Over four hundred years earlier, Joseph was sold into Egypt for 20 shekels. The free Israelite citizen was worth about 50 shekels (Lev 27:3f.).

<sup>70sn</sup> See further B. S. Jackson, “The Goring Ox Again [Ex. 21,28-36],” JJP 18 (1974): 55-94.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and (if) an ox will gore a man, or a woman, and he dies, the ox will :surely: be stoned, and his flesh will not be eaten, and the master of the ox is innocent, (but) if (that) ox was a gorer <previously>, and his master was [warned], and he does not safeguard him, and he [kills] a man or a woman, the ox will be stoned, and also his master will be [killed], if a covering is set down upon him , and he will give the ransom price of his being, just like all (that) was set down upon him, or he gores a son, or he gores a daughter, likewise, this decision, will be done to him, if the ox gores a servant, or a bondwoman, he will give to his lords a silver of three sheqels, and the ox will be stoned,...

Charles Thomson OT If a bull gore a man or a woman and he or she die, the bull shall be stoned to death and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall be held guiltless: but if the bull hath heretofore been accustomed to push with his horns, and this hath been made known to his owner, and he hath not shut him up; if he kill a man or woman, the bull shall be stoned and his owner also may be put to death. But if a fine shall be laid upon him, he shall pay as a ransom for his life whatever they lay upon him. And if the bull shall gore a son or a daughter, they shall deal with him according to this law. But if the bull shall gore a man servant or a maid servant he shall pay their master thirty didrachms of silver and the bull shall be stoned.

C. Thompson (updated) OT .  
Context Group Version .  
English Standard Version .  
Green’s Literal Translation .  
Modern English Version

### Laws About Property

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox must surely be stoned and its flesh must not be eaten, but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. But if the ox has had the habit of goring, and the owner has been made aware of it, and he has not kept it in, and it has killed a man or a woman, then the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom is set for him, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatever is demanded of him. Whether it gored a son or gored a daughter, it will be done to him according to this rule. If the ox gores a male servant or a female servant, then its owner shall give thirty shekels [About 12 ounces, or 345 grams.] of silver to their master, and the ox must be stoned.

Modern Literal Version .  
Modern KJV .  
New American Standard B. .  
New European Version

If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the bull shall not be held responsible. But if the bull had a habit of goring in the past, and it has been testified to its owner, and he has not kept it in, but it has killed a man or a woman, the bull shall be stoned, and its owner shall also be put to death. If a ransom is laid on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is laid on him. Whether it has gored a son or has gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If

## New King James Version

the bull gores a male servant or a female servant, thirty shekels of silver shall be given to their master, and the ox shall be stoned.

## Animal Control Laws

"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 [*exempt from punishment*]. But if the ox tended [*was inclined*] 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. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 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.

## Niobi Study Bible

## Owen's Translation

## Restored Holy Bible 6.0

## Updated Bible Version 2.17

## A Voice in the Wilderness

## Webster's Bible Translation

## World English Bible

## Young's Literal Translation

## Young's Updated LT

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"And when an ox does gore man or woman, and they have died, the ox is certainly stoned, and his flesh is not eaten, and the owner of the ox is acquitted; and if the ox is one accustomed to gore heretofore, and it has been testified to its owner, and he does not watch it, and it has put to death a man or woman, the ox is stoned, and its owner also is put to death.

"If atonement is laid upon him, then he has given the ransom of his life, according to all that is laid upon him; whether it gore a son or gore a daughter, according to this judgment it is done to him.

"If the ox gore a man-servant or a handmaid, thirty silver shekels he does give to their lord, and the ox is stoned.

## The gist of this passage:

If an ox gores someone for the first time, the ox is to be destroyed and the flesh is not to be eaten. If this has happened before, the owner is fully responsible for any damage or harm; to the point of execution if someone dies as a result. If a slave is gored, then the owner is responsible for the cost of the slave to the slave's owner.

28-32

## Exodus 21:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
nâgach (נָגַח) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHKH</i> ]	<i>to push, to thrust, to gore, to strike with the horn [used of horned animals]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5055 BDB #618

Exodus 21:28a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
'ôw (וּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** When as ox gores a man or a woman and [that person] dies,...

There will be a variety of circumstances offered up, but most of them deal with an ox which gores a man or a woman. This first case assumes that the ox has gores someone for the first time.

Exodus 21:28b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çâqal (צָקַל) [pronounced saw-KAHL]	<i>to throw stones, to stone, to overwhelm with stones; possibly to heap stones on the dead [as a disgrace]</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #5619 BDB #709
çâqal (צָקַל) [pronounced saw-KAHL]	<i>to throw stones, to be stoned [to death], to be overwhelm with stones</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5619 BDB #709

## Exodus 21:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

**Translation:** ...the ox will surely be stoned...

The ox will be destroyed. Anytime that there is a an ox that is harmful to people, that ox must be destroyed. We will find that again and again in this passage.

In most counties, if a dog has been shown to be dangerous (it attacks someone and injures them), laws usually require that dog to be destroyed. Like so many of the laws which we have studied, these are absolutely up-to-date and applicable to modern society.

## Exodus 21:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to be eaten; metaphorically: to be consumed [destroyed] [by fire]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced baw-SAWR]	<i>flesh; body; animal meat</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1320 BDB #142

**Translation:** ...and its flesh will not be eaten,...

These are domesticated animals and they are accustomed to doing the work required of them. They are fed and taken care of as a result. However, if a domesticated animal turns into a killer, then there might be a biological reason for that; a sickness or an illness; and eating the meat may pass that along to those eating it.

In any case, its flesh is considered corrupt. Furthermore, how would that seem for the ox one day to gore a man to death, and the next day, the owner of the ox prepares this great feast for his family and friends, eating this ox? Bad optics, but probably not the reason for this law.

This additional provision protects the ox owner and the ox. Let's say that a nearby family claims to have been harmed by the ox, in order to take that ox and barbeque it. This provision makes such a thing impossible.

## Exodus 21:28d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced <i>BAH-gah</i> ]	<i>owner, lord, husband; master; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1167 BDB #127
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
nâqîy (נָקִי) [pronounced <i>naw-KEE</i> ]	<i>acquitted, clean, cleared, free from [guilt, obligations, punishment], unpunished, guiltless, innocent</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5355 BDB #667

**Translation:** ...but the owner of the ox [will be] acquitted.

In this first situation, the owner is acquitted. He is not considered to be guilty or responsible for an ox that becomes uncontrollable.

Exodus 21:28 *When as ox gores a man or a woman and [that person] dies, the ox will surely be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox [will be] acquitted.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

When this was spoken by God, having oxen (or other kind of cattle) was common. Therefore, laws needed to be on the books about dangerous cattle.

Today there are people who own certain breeds of dogs who have attacked people unprovoked. This would not apply when an animal is kept in a back yard and someone climbs the fence to get into the back yard. This is where the animal is out running free and attacks someone.

## Exodus 21:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
îm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

## Exodus 21:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
naggâch (נגח) [pronounced <i>nahg-GAWKH</i> ]	<i>accustomed [apt] to goring, addicted to goring; vicious, predilection [predisposition] for goring</i>	adjective	Strong's #5056 BDB #618
min (מן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
t <sup>e</sup> môwl (תמול) [pronounced <i>t<sup>e</sup>MOHL</i> ]	<i>yesterday; and is used figuratively for recently, formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #865 (and #8543) BDB #1069
shil <sup>e</sup> shôwm (שלושום) [pronounced <i>shil-SHOHM</i> ]	<i>three days ago, the day before yesterday</i>	adverb	Strong's #8032 BDB #1026

Literally, min plus the two prepositions should be rendered *from yesterday three days ago*; figuratively, we might say *the last couple of three days*; it is idiomatic for *at any time before, in the past, heretofore, before, from before*.

**Translation:** However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently...

Exodus 21:29a But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past,... (NKJV)

I gave this a slightly different translation.

Exodus 21:29a However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:29a However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring... (Kukis paraphrase)

The adjective which I translated *predilection for goring* is only found here and v. 36, but the translation is reasonable. Part of v. 29 has been freely translated, but its sense is clear. Someone owns an animal that is dangerous; it has attacked people before, yet the owner does not make certain that the animal is destroyed or carefully caged. Under those circumstances, the owner becomes just as liable for what the animal does as the animal itself is.

We do not have these laws on the books today—at least, not with these same consequences. There are people who keep dangerous dogs who do not properly control them. They would be more apt to carefully control these beasts if they faced execution for what their animals do.

In any case, this ox is known to have gored someone before and the owner has not taken steps to prevent this from reoccurring.



## Exodus 21:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gûwd (גִּדּוּד) [pronounced <i>good</i> ]	<i>to be declared, to be shown; possibly, to be warned, testified to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal perfect	Strong's #5749 BDB #729
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ba'ălêy (בְּאֵלַי) [pronounced <i>bah-ġuh-LAY</i> ]	<i>aristocracy, leaders, baal's, lords, masters; landowners, movers and shakers, supervisors, administrators, citizens, inhabitants; owners</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1181 (plural of Strong's #1167 & 1168) BDB #127
I am confused at the use of the plural here and at the end of this verse.			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i> ]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

All of the BDB Qal definitions: *to keep, have charge of; to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save life; watch, watchman (participle); to watch for, wait for; to watch, observe; to keep, retain, treasure up (in memory); to keep (within bounds), restrain; to observe, celebrate, keep (sabbath or covenant or commands), perform (vow); to keep, preserve, protect; to keep, reserve.*

**Translation:** ...and [this] was declared to its owner, but he has not kept him [in and away from the public],...

Let us also consider this information being made known to the owner of the ox. If a ranch is large enough, it is possible that he is not informed of the aggressive behavior of one of his animals.

In this example of the given law, the owner has been made aware that he has an animal that may kill. He is required to have put that animal down or to have it securely confined. If he does not, then the owner is personally responsible for whatever the animal does.

## Exodus 21:29c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

**Translation:** ...and [the ox] kills a man or a woman,...

The scenario presented here is one of liability. The ox is known to have aggressive tendencies and the owner has been warned.

In our society, we are more likely to be speaking of a pit bull or another large dog, rather than an ox.

Given those circumstances, what happens next?

## Exodus 21:29d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
çâqal (סָקַל) [pronounced <i>saw-KAHL</i> ]	<i>to throw stones, to be stoned [to death], to be overwhelm with stones</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5619 BDB #709
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean *and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore*.

## Exodus 21:29d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ba'ălêy (בְּאֵלַי) [pronounced <i>bah-ġuh-LAY</i> ]	<i>aristocracy, leaders, baal's, lords, masters; landowners, movers and shakers, supervisors, administrators, citizens, inhabitants; owners</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1181 (plural of Strong's #1167 & 1168) BDB #127
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** ...then the ox will be stoned and the owner executed.

The ox is destroyed and this time, the owner is held liable, as if he himself had committed killing himself. Therefore, the ox's owner could be executed. In our society, civil damages might be assessed as well.

I had a friend whose two-year old child was bitten in the face by their dog; immediately the dog was put down, as it should have been. That is adhering to the Biblical principles set forth in this passage.

Exodus 21:29 However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently and [this] was declared to its owner, but he has not kept him [in and away from the public], and [the ox] kills a man or a woman, then the ox will be stoned and the owner executed. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The owner of a dangerous animal who did not destroy this animal or keep it confined, is just as guilty as someone who intentionally kills another person. Our laws today are not this strict.

## Exodus 21:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
kôpher (כֹּפֶר) [pronounced <i>KOH-fer</i> ]	<i>price of a life, ransom; bribe</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3724 BDB #497
This noun can also mean <i>price of a life, ransom, bribe; asphalt, pitch (as a covering); the henna plant, name of a plant (henna?); village</i> . Ransom is its primary use.			
shîyth (שִׁיט) [pronounced <i>sheeth</i> ]	<i>to be imposed upon; to be set upon; to be laid upon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>ġahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside; because of, on account of</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

**Translation:** *If a ransom is laid upon him...*

V. 30 is an odd verse because in it we have a couple of words which often are translated by the same words in English, but are different words in the Hebrew. The hypothetical particle is followed by *kôpher* (כֹּפֶר) [pronounced *KOH-fer*] and it means *ransom, price of a life*.

After ransom, we have oft-times used verb *shîyth* (שִׁיחַ) [pronounced *sheeth*] and it means *place, set, put*. It is in the Hophal, which is the causative passive—so this ransom is placed up him or decreed against him. The end of that phrase should be translated *upon him* or *against him*.

There is a way for the owner to avoid a death sentence, and that is for him to pay a ransom or redemption amount. This amount for an adult is not specified here.

At this point, we have a circumstance very similar to the laws today in the United States. There are potential civil penalties today for someone who has a dangerous animal; and being able to redeem himself means, he is paying to save his own life.

Exodus 21:30b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
pid <sup>e</sup> yôm/pid <sup>e</sup> yôn (פִּדְיוֹן/פִּדְיוֹן) [pronounced <i>pid-YOME/pid-YONE</i> ]	<i>ransom, a redemption, something which has been redeemed</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6306 BDB #804.
There does not appear to be any appreciable difference between this and its feminine counterpart.			
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i> ]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's # none BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]; also kol (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kol</i> ]	<i>all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything</i>	masculine singular noun without the definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

In Joshua 1:7, Owen and the NASB translates these three words *wherever*; Young: *in every [place] where*; Rotherham and the KJV: *wheresoever*. In 2Sam. 7:7, the NASB renders this *wherever*, but Owens translates it *in all places*. Young, in an unusual move, renders this *during all [the time] that* in 2Sam. 7:7. In 1Kings 2:26, Owens renders this, *in all that*. Literally, this is *in all which, in all that*; and *wherever* is a good modern rendering.

## Exodus 21:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shîyth (שִׁיִּת) [pronounced <i>sheeth</i> ]	<i>to be imposed upon; to be set upon; to be laid upon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside; because of, on account of</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

**Translation:** ...and he has given a redemption for his life and all that was laid upon him.

The errant owner's responsibility is delineated next. We have the Qal perfect of nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAN*], which also means *to put, to set* and it also means *to give*.

We have almost a half-dozen words which are all translated *ransom*, this one being pid<sup>e</sup>yôm/pid<sup>e</sup>yôn (פִּדְיוֹם/פִּדְיוֹן) [pronounced *pid-YOME/pid-YONE*] and it is found in Numbers 3:49, 51 Psalm 49:8. It is in the construct, so the noun to which it is connected can be translated with an apostrophe s, or it can read a *ransom of*. After *life* (literally, *soul*), which has the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, meaning *his*, we have the prefixed preposition kîy (meaning *that, for, when, because*), we have *all, the whole* and the relative pronoun. So far this gives us, *if a ransom is assessed against him, then he will give a ransom of his life, that the entirety of which...* The verse ends with *assessed against him*.

Previously, when an amount was assessed, there was the input of the person most affected (here, obviously a wife, husband or family member), which amount might be modified by the court.

Exodus 21:30 *If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption for his life and all that was laid upon him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Instead of a life for life, restitution is required instead. No specific amount is delineated here, but a financial restitution is imposed instead of the owner's life being required. Therefore, the victim's family requires some restitution and said restitution is agreed upon by the judge.

## Exodus 21:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
nâgach (נָגַח) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHKH</i> ]	<i>to push, to thrust, to gore, to strike with the horn [used of horned animals]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5055 BDB #618

## Exodus 21:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ôw (או) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
bath (בת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
nâgach (נגח) [pronounced naw-GAHKH]	<i>to push, to thrust, to gore, to strike with the horn [used of horned animals]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5055 BDB #618

**Translation:** If [the ox] gores a son or a daughter,...

This sort of thing might also happen to a son or daughter.

## Exodus 21:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
mîsh <sup>e</sup> pâṭ (משפט) [pronounced mish <sup>e</sup> -PAWT]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048
zeh (זה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
'âsâh (עשה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to be done [made, produced]; to be offered, to be observed, to be used; was made [constructed, fashioned], to be formed, to be prepared</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...the same judgment will be done to him.

The payment will be handled the same way, whether the victim is an adult or a child. The exact same laws apply; and sons and daughters are not considered to be of less value than adults.



Exodus 21:31 *If [the ox] gores a son or a daughter, the same judgment will be done to him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

If this animal gores a son or daughter, and the owner is aware of the problem already due to previous incidents, then he will be completely responsible for the damages assessed against him—as if he had committed the act himself. In this situation, the life of the owner does not seem to be required but he may have to pay a great deal of money.

### Exodus 21:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ʿEB-ved]	<i>slave, servant; worker; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
nâgach (נָגַח) [pronounced naw-GAHKH]	<i>to push, to thrust, to gore, to strike with the horn</i> [used of horned animals]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5055 BDB #618
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
ʾôw (אוּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
ʾâmâh (אִמָּה) [pronounced aw-MAW]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #519 BDB #51

**Translation:** *If the ox gores a slave or a maidservant,...*

Like it or not, since slaves are property, they will be treated differently.

### Exodus 21:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]	<i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3701 BDB #494
shʾlôshîym (שְׁלֹשִׁים) [pronounced shʾlow-SHEEM]	<i>thirty</i>	masculine plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026
sheqel (שֶׁקֶל) [pronounced SHEH-keh]	<i>0.4 ounces or 11 grams and is transliterated shekel</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #8255 BDB #1053

## Exodus 21:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced leh]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ădônây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>Lord (s), Master (s), my Lord (s), Sovereign; my lord [master]; can refer to the Trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai, adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

**Translation:** ...then 30 shekels of silver will be given to the lord [of the servant]...

For a slave, a specific amount is given here, which is 30 shekels of silver.

**Application:** Today, no doubt, someone could read this and be triggered. He might exclaim, “No one should belong to another person. That should not ever be a part of any society.” Very often, this same person is often in favor of a socialist society, where all people essentially belong to the state (that is, they are completely subject to the dictates of the state). It is a mistake to think that, somehow, people under socialism belong to some vast collective called society. That is a complete misunderstanding of socialism. This simply means that the person who believes this has bought into the rationale for socialism. What is really the case is, under socialism, there are very powerful men at the top and everyone in that state belongs to those who run the state. That is, a Russian leader wants someone assassinated, then that is a done deal, no matter where that person lives. If a North Korean leader wants to punish a man by punishing his family, then he may send a person's entire family to a labor camp where they will be slowly starved and/or worked to death. Socialism is no different than fascism. There may be a different number of people at the top, but generally speaking, there is one leader and everyone is subject to that man's whims, or to the whims of his underlings.

**Application:** Under socialism, those at the top will determine where you live, what you can do, what foods you are able to eat, what kind of medical care you are able to receive, as well as how much money you can make. If anything, socialism is even more oppressive than most fascist regimes.

Back to the topic at hand:

## Exodus 21:32c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
çâqal (צָקַל) [pronounced saw-KAHL]	<i>to throw stones, to be stoned [to death], to be overwhelm with stones</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5619 BDB #709

**Translation:** ...and the ox will be stoned.

As in all of the previous situations, the ox is destroyed.

**Application:** Although we have a variety of animal control laws today; we also have laws concerning negligence and foreseeable results. A person today must exercise normal care to keep others from becoming injured. For this reason, a refrigerator may not be simply left out of doors<sup>34</sup>; a hole in the ground (for whatever reason) must have signs or barricades (depending upon its size). These kinds of laws are directly related to the law found in this passage.

Exodus 21:32 If the ox gores a slave or a maidservant, then 30 shekels of silver will be given to the lord [of the servant] and the ox will be stoned. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Here we have a set price agreed upon for the injury caused to a slave. The slaves are not compensated; their masters are.

Exodus 21:28–32 When an ox gores a man or a woman and [that person] dies, the ox will surely be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox [will be] acquitted. However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently and [this] was declared to its owner, but he has not kept him [in and away from the public], and [the ox] kills a man or a woman, then the ox will be stoned and the owner executed. If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption for his life and all that was laid upon him. If [the ox] gores a son or a daughter, the same judgment will be done to him. If the ox gores a slave or a maidservant, then 30 shekels of silver will be given to the lord [of the servant] and the ox will be stoned. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This is a very common sense law. If an ox gores someone out of the blue, the animal is destroyed and not eaten. However, if the owner allows to live an animal known to have gored and that animal gores again, then the animal will be destroyed and the owner will be liable as if he has committed this act himself. If the animal kills someone, then the owner will be executed. If the animal gores a slave, then he will pay for the slave.

**Application:** If a vehicle is found to have a defect of some sort which affects the safety of the vehicles, then the manufacturer often recalls the vehicles or offers to fix the problem. In fact, in today's world, they can be very insistent about repairs to vehicles which have potential problems.

It is quite surprising just how thorough all of these laws are; and just how pertinent that they are to today's living.

Exodus 21:28–32 If an ox gores a man or a woman and that person dies, then the ox will be destroyed and its flesh will not be eaten. However, the ox's owner will not be held liable for the death. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring and the owner has been warned, then the ox will be destroyed and the owner executed. Now, if the owner pays a reasonable ransom for his life, then that will be considered sufficient. If the ox gores a son or daughter, the same judgment will be applied to him; and if the ox gore a male or female slave, the ransom of 30 shekels of silver will be required (and paid to the owner of the slave). Again, the ox will be destroyed. (Kukis paraphrase)

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This next law is all about foreseeable damage and/or safety issues. City workers might dig a hole at some point in a street; what do they always do? They put bright orange safety cones all around it and often barriers, so that no one can step into this hole by accident. This goes all the way back to Exodus 21.

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<sup>34</sup> At one time, a refrigerator could only be opened from the outside, meaning that someone could lock himself inside of a refrigerator and have no way to escape.

And when leaves open a man a pit or when digs a man a pit, and he does not cover him, and falls there-ward an ox or an ass, an owner of the pit will make good [with] silver. He will restore his owners and the one dying is to him.

Exodus  
21:33–34

When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [**or, fill it up (again)**], and an ox or a donkey falls in there, the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good. He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal].

Let's say a man leaves a pit open or he digs a pit, but does not take any safety precautions, and an ox or donkey falls into the pit—the owner of the pit will need to make good on this loss. He will restore the animal's owner with silver and he will keep the animal which died.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And when leaves open a man a pit or when digs a man a pit, and he does not cover him, and falls there-ward an ox or an ass, an owner of the pit will make good [with] silver. He will restore his owners and the one dying is to him.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And if a man open a pit, or dig a pit, and doth not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the master of the pit shall pay: he shall give silver to his owner, and the carcass shall be his own.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And if a man openeth a pit in the street, and doth not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; the master of the pit shall deliver silver to give to its owner the price of the ox or the ass, and the dead body shall be his.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If a man open a pit, and dig one, and cover it not, and an ox or an ass fall into it, The owner of the pit shall pay the price of the beasts: and that which is dead shall be his own.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make it good. He shall give money to its owner, and the dead animal shall be his.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And if a man shall open a wheat pit or a man shall dig a well, and not cover them, and an ox or an ass fall into it; The owner of the pit shall pay money to the owner of the animal, and the dead animal shall be his.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if any one open a pit or dig a cavity in stone, and cover it not, and an ox or an ass fall in there, the owner of the pit shall make compensation; he shall give money to their owner, and the dead shall be his own.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	If a man makes a hole in the earth without covering it up, and an ox or an ass dropping into it comes to its death; The owner of the hole is responsible; he will have to make payment to their owner, but the dead beast will be his.
Easy English	If a man finds a hole, he must cover it. If he digs a hole, he must cover it. If he does not do this, a cow or a donkey may fall into it. 34 Then the man who dug the hole must pay for the loss of the animal. He must pay money to the animal's master but he can keep the dead animal for himself.
Easy-to-Read Version–2001	.

Easy-to-Read Version—2006	“A man might take a cover off a well or dig a hole and not cover it. If another man’s animal comes and falls into that hole, the man who owns the hole is guilty. The man who owns the hole must pay for the animal. But after he pays for the animal, he will be allowed to keep the body of that animal.
God’s Word™	<b>Laws Concerning Property</b> “Whenever someone opens up a cistern or digs a new one and doesn’t cover it and a bull or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the cistern must make up for the loss. He must pay money to the animal’s owner, and then the dead animal will be his.
Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	. “If someone uncovers a cistern or digs a pit and leaves it open and an ox or donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit must pay whatever the animal is worth to its owner but can keep the dead animal.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. “Suppose someone uncovers a pit or digs one and does not cover it. And suppose an ox or donkey falls into it. Then the person who opened the pit must pay the animal’s owner for the loss. The dead animal will belong to the person who opened the pit.
New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	Suppose someone's ox or donkey is killed by falling into an open pit that you dug or left uncovered on your property. You must pay for the dead animal, and it becomes yours.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	“When a man leaves a deep hole open, or digs a deep hole and does not cover it, and a bull or donkey falls into it, the owner of the hole will pay for the loss. He will give money to the animal’s owner. And the dead animal will become his.
New Living Translation	“Suppose someone digs or uncovers a pit and fails to cover it, and then an ox or a donkey falls into it. The owner of the pit must pay full compensation to the owner of the animal, but then he gets to keep the dead animal.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Suppose someone has a pit and does not keep it covered, and someone’s bull or donkey falls into it and dies. Then the owner of the pit must pay for the animal that died. He must give the money to the animal’s owner, but then he can take away the animal that died and do whatever he wants to with it.
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	‘If anyone digs an open pit or a hole in rock and fails to cover it, and an ox or a burro falls into it; the owner of the pit must pay a compensation to [the animal’s] owner, but the dead [animal] will thereafter be his.
Beck’s American Translation	.
Common English Bible	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If a man who has opened an old well, or is digging a new one, does not cover it up, and ox or ass falls into it, the owner of the well shall pay the full value of the beasts; the carcase he may keep for himself.
Translation for Translators	Suppose someone has a pit/cistern and does not keep it covered, and someone’s bull or donkey falls into it and dies. Then the owner of the pit/cistern must pay for the animal that died. He must give the money to the animal’s owner, but then he can take away the animal that died <i>and do whatever he wants to with it.</i>

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If a man opens a dry well, or digs a dry well, and fails to cover it, and an ox or donkey falls in, the dry well's owner must repay in silver the owner of the lost animal, and the dead animal will then belong to him.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<b>Laws of Accidents and Thefts.</b> 'And if a man opens a well, or 33 digs a well, and does not cover it, and an ox or an ass shall fall into it, because of the well he shall pay a money fine to its owner, and the dead shall be his.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	If a man open a well or dig a pit and cover it not, but that an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good and give money unto their master, and the dead beast shall be his.
HCSB	.
International Standard V	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	"If anyone uncovers a pit or digs one and fails to cover it and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the one who opened the pit must pay the owner for the loss and take the dead animal in exchange.
Peter Pett's translation	.
Unfolding Bible Literal Text	.
Unlocked Literal Bible	.
Urim-Thummim Version	.
Wikipedia Bible Project	.

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, The lord of the pit shall make it complete, and give silver to their lord; and the dead animal shall be his.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	<i>Property Damage.</i> When someone uncovers or digs a cistern and does not cover it over again, should an ox or a donkey fall into it, the owner of the cistern must make good by restoring the value of the animal to its owner, but the dead animal he may keep.
New English Bible—1970	When a man removes the cover of a well Or cistern or digs a well Or cistern and leaves it uncovered, then if an ox or an ass falls into it, the owner of the well shall make good the loss. He shall repay the owner of the beast in silver, and the dead beast shall be his.
New Jerusalem Bible	.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible—1989	.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	"If someone removes the cover from a cistern or digs one and fails to cover it, and an ox or donkey falls in, the owner of the cistern must make good the loss by compensating the animal's owner; but the dead animal will be his.
exeGesés companion Bible	And if a man opens a well, or if a man digs a well and covers not,



and an ox or a he burro falls therein;  
the master of the well shalams  
and returns silver to their master;  
and what died is his.

Hebraic Roots Bible .  
Israeli Authorized Version .  
The Israel Bible (beta) .  
JPS (Tanakh—1985) .  
Kaplan Translation .  
*The Scriptures* 1998 .  
Tree of Life Version .

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible .  
Awful Scroll Bible . Was a man to open a pit, or was a man to dig a pit - was it to be covered? - a plowing beast or an ass is to have fallen into it? - The possessor of the pit was to repay. He was to turn back silver to the owner, and that dying is his.  
  
Charles Thomson OT .  
Concordant Literal Version .  
Darby Translation .  
exeGeses companion Bible .  
Orthodox Jewish Bible . And if an ish shall open a bor (pit), or if an ish shall dig a bor and not cover it, and an ox or a donkey fall therein;  
The ba'al habor shall make restitution, and give kesef unto their ba'alim; and the carcass shall be his.  
  
Rotherham's *Emphasized B.* .  
Third Millennium Bible .

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible* . "If a man leaves a pit open, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make restitution; he shall give money to the animal's owner, but the dead [animal] shall be his.  
  
The Expanded Bible . "If a man takes the cover off a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and another man's ox or donkey comes and falls into it, the owner of the pit must pay [compensate] the owner of the animal for the loss. The dead animal will belong to the one who pays.  
  
The Geneva Bible .  
Kretzmann's Commentary . And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the result being that his neighbor is harmed in his possessions, the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them, restore their full value in money; and the dead beast shall be his, he may dispose of the carcass as he sees fit.  
  
Syndein/Thieme .  
The Voice . If someone uncovers an *old* pit or digs a *new* pit and leaves it uncovered, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, then the person who owns the pit *will be held responsible and* must compensate the *owner for the full* cost of the animal; but the dead animal *at the bottom of the* pit belongs to the man who owns it.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

The Complete Tanach . And if a person opens a pit, or if a person digs a pit and does not cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it,...

**And if a person opens a pit:** which was covered, and he uncovered it.

**or if... digs:** Why was this stated? If he is liable for opening [a pit that had already been dug], is it not [true that he would be] even more [guilty] for digging [a new pit]? But this is to include a digger [who digs deeper] after a digger, that he is liable. [I.e., if one digs a pit nine handbreadths deep, which is capable of injuring an animal but not killing it, and another digs one handbreadth more, making the open pit capable of killing an animal, the second digger is liable in all cases.] -[From B.K. 51a]

**and does not cover it:** intimating that if he covered it, he is exempt [from paying for any damages that could occur], and the text speaks of one who digs in a public domain. -[From B.K. 55b]

**and a bull or a donkey:** The same applies to all domestic animals and beasts, for wherever it says: "a bull and a donkey," we [can] derive [that it applies to all domestic animals] through a הַקָּזָה, similar wording of רִשׁוֹ שֶׁרֵשׁ, [which is] from [the law concerning the] Sabbath, as it is stated: "In order that your bull and your donkey rest" (Exod. 23:12). Just as there [referring to the Sabbath] every domestic animal and beast is like the bull [in reference to the law], for it says elsewhere [regarding the Sabbath] (Deut. 5:14) "[...]you shall not perform any kind of work, neither you, nor your son..." and all your animals," here, too, all animals and beasts are like the bull [in reference to the law]. The bull and the donkey are mentioned only [for us to understand that] for a bull [that falls into a pit the owner is liable] but not for a man [who falls into a pit], and [he is liable for] a donkey but not for utensils. -[From B.K. 10b]

...the owner of the pit shall pay; he shall return money to its owner, and the dead body shall be his.

**the owner of the pit:** [This refers to] the creator of the obstacle [i.e., the pit], although the pit is not his, for he made it in a public domain, Scripture made him its owner, insofar as he is liable for its damages. -[From B.K. 29b]

**he shall return money to its owner:** Heb. בִּישִׁי. [The word] בִּישִׁי [is written] to include [anything] worth money, even bran. -[From B.K. 7a] (See Exod. 22:4: "the best of his field or the best of his vineyard he shall pay," which Rashi explains to mean that damages are paid from the best land. Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua in the Talmud (B.K. 7b) solves this apparent discrepancy by concluding that it applies only if the defendant prefers to pay the damages with land, but if he prefers to pay with movable objects, everything is deemed the best, because if it cannot be sold here, it can be sold elsewhere.) [Addendum to Rashi] [It can therefore be easily converted to cash.]

**and the dead body shall be his -:** [The dead animal will belong to] the one [owner] who sustained the damage. They assess the carcass, and he [the owner] takes it for its value, and the damager pays him in addition to it [the carcass] payment for his damage. -[From Mechilta, B.K. 10b]

Kaplan Translation

### *A Hole in the Ground*

[This is the law] if a person digs a hole in the ground, or uncovers a hole, and does not cover it over. If an ox or donkey falls into it, the one responsible for the hole must make restitution, restoring the full value [of the animal] to its owner. The dead animal remains the property [of its owner].

#### **of its owner**

(Mekhilta; Rashi; Yad, Niz'key Mamon 7:13)

"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 into it, the owner of the pit must repay<sup>71</sup> the loss. He must give money<sup>72</sup> to its owner, and the dead animal<sup>73</sup> will become his.

<sup>71n</sup> The verb is a Piel imperfect from שָׁלַם (shalam); it has the idea of making payment in full, making recompense, repaying. These imperfects could be given a future tense translation

as imperfects of instruction, but in the property cases an obligatory imperfect fits better – this is what he is bound or obliged to do – what he must do.

<sup>72tn</sup> Heb “silver.”

<sup>73tn</sup> Here the term “animal” has been supplied.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and (if) a man opens a cistern, or (if) a man digs a cistern, and he does not cover him over, and an ox or a donkey falls unto it, the master of the cistern will make restitution, he will [return] silver to his master, and the dead one will exist (for) himself,...
Charles Thomson OT	.
C. Thompson (updated) OT	.
Context Group Version	.
English Standard Version	Laws About Restitution “When a man opens a pit, or when a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make restoration. He shall give money to its owner, and the dead beast shall be his.
Green’s Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern Literal Version	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 into it, the owner of the pit must make restitution. He must give money to their owner, and the dead animal will be his.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	.
New European Version	If a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and doesn’t cover it, and a bull or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make it good. He shall give money to its owner, and the dead animal shall be his.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen’s Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster’s Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young’s Literal Translation	.
Young’s Updated LT	“And when a man does open a pit, or when a man does dig a pit, and does not cover it, and an ox or ass has fallen there, — the owner of the pit does repay, money he does give back to its owner, and the dead is his.

**The gist of this passage:** If a man digs a pit or opens it up, without taking any precautions, and an animal falls into it, the owner of the animal is compensated for his loss and the man keeps the carcass.

33-34

Exodus 21:33a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וי) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251

## Exodus 21:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
pâthâh (פתח) [pronounced paw-THAW]	<i>to spread out, to open; to be open; to be open and ingenuous in mind [like children and young people]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6601 BDB #834
ʾîysh (איש) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bôwr (בור) [pronounced bohr]	<i>pit, cistern, well; prison, dungeon; grave, sepulcher; the dead</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #953 BDB #92
ʾôw (או) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kârâh (כרך) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to bore, to dig; to hew [this word is a homonym]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3738 BDB #500
ʾîysh (איש) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bôwr (בור) [pronounced bohr]	<i>pit, cistern, well; prison, dungeon; grave, sepulcher; the dead</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #953 BDB #92

**Translation:** When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit,...

Any large hole is a potential safety issue which could affect others. A man digs a pit and does not cover it; or he digs a pit and just wanders off to do something else. He takes no precautions to warn others.

This puts responsibility onto the person who digs a pit, but does not foresee the logical consequences of that action.

## Exodus 21:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
kâṣâh (כָּסָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3680 BDB #491

**Translation:** ...and he does not cover it [or, fill it up (again)],...

The man does not cover the pit in some way. What the man does not do is the Piel imperfect of kâṣâh (כָּסָה) [pronounced *kaw-SAWH*], which means, *to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over*. Strong's #3680 BDB #491. It almost sounds as if someone is being encouraged to hide the fact that there is a hole which has been recently dug. This verb has a more primitive meaning, as given by Strong: *to plump, to fill up hollows*. So, the idea is, you cannot simply dig a hole and just leave it like that. We might better understand this word to mean, *to fill up (with dirt)*. One reason for digging a hole is in search of water (digging a well). If a hole is dug and there is no luck finding water, the well-digger (s) cannot just leave it and go off elsewhere and start digging again. It has to be filled in.

Let's say that you dig a hole and find water. Then what? When a well is dug and water is found, there are apparently several approaches in the ancient world. Some would place stones above ground around the well and others placed stones in the ground, to keep the opening for the well firm.

**Ancient Pre-Christian Era Well** (a graphic); (from [Bible History](#)); accessed January 28, 2025. An established well becomes a very important place. Water being necessary to all life, ownership and use of a well became very important issues and everyone in the region knew where all of the wells were. Other things might be built around the well, but a distance from it, such as water troughs (when sheep would be watered, we don't want them drinking directly out of the well). Other laws came into effect once a well has been established.



I got off on a tangent here. To go back to the original point, when looking for water, you could not dig a well, not find water, and just wander off elsewhere to try again. You had to fill in the hole that you just dug.

## Exodus 21:33c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251



## Exodus 21:33c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb with the directional hê	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
This simply means <i>there</i> ; hê acts almost like a demonstrative. Owens calls this a locational hê.			
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
’ôw (וְ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
chămôwr (חֹמֶר) [pronounced khuh-MOHR]	<i>ass, male donkey, he-ass, burrow</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2543 BDB #331

**Translation:** ...and an ox or a donkey falls in there,...

Now, let's say that a person has dug a hole and left it, then an animal wanders onto the property and falls into the pit. He is liable for what has taken place.

Exodus 21:33 *When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [or, fill it up (again)], and an ox or a donkey falls in there,...* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The owner should be able to foresee that this hole is a danger to people and animals. Therefore, he is liable for any problems related to this hole which he has dug.

## Exodus 21:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
I considered this phrase to be a continuation of v. 33.			
ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced BAH-gahl]	<i>owner, lord, husband; master; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1167 BDB #127
bôwr (בוֹר) [pronounced bohr]	<i>pit, cistern, well; prison, dungeon; grave, sepulcher; the dead</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #953 BDB #92
shâlêm (שָׁלַם) [pronounced shaw-LAHM]	<i>to make secure, to keep safe; to complete (finish); to make good; to restore, to requite, to recompense (pay)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7999 BDB #1022



**Translation:** ...the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good.

The person who dug the pit is liable. He has created an unsafe condition, but did not do anything to warn others or to keep people or animals from falling into the pit. He left the pit open; he did not try to fill it in.

Exodus 21:33–34a When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [or, fill it up (again)], and an ox or a donkey falls in there, the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good.

Exodus 21:34b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
keṣeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]	silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3701 BDB #494
It is difficult to determine whether <i>silver</i> belongs at the end of v. 34a or if it should begin v. 34b (the latter is the choice of most translators).			
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ba'ălêy (בְּאֵלַי) [pronounced bah-ġuh-LAY]	aristocracy, leaders, baal's, lords, masters; landowners, movers and shakers, supervisors, administrators, citizens, inhabitants; owners	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1181 (plural of Strong's #1167 & 1168) BDB #127
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ or וֶ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal].

The person who dug the pit will be liable for what happens. If an animal falls into the pit, he will pay for the animal and he gets to keep it.

Obviously, there are many kinds of little alterations here which could affect what happens here. The animal might fall into the pit and is injured; the animal might fall into the pit, but can be retrieved, etc. We work from the general idea that the one digging out the pit is liable for any harm that comes to anyone or anything related to the pit.

Exodus 21:34b **He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

In this particular example, an animal falls into the pit and dies as a result.

What about this thing where the dead animal belongs to the person who dug the pit? What happens to the animal's carcass is up to the person who dug the pit. The original owner is not required to come and fetch the animal. The new owner must remove the carcass himself (which he would do in order to salvage the meat).

Exodus 21:33–34 **When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [or, fill it up (again)], and an ox or a donkey falls in there, the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good. He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Here we have personal responsibility for what has been done. The person at fault here is someone who has set up a potentially hazardous situation. To apply this to today, it obviously does not need to be a pit. A person could leave a car up on a jack for several days, they might leave a swimming pool gate open for several hours. This is neglect of one person which, in this case, causes the destruction of property which belongs to another. The person guilty of neglect must make restitution and he is allowed to keep the animal that he killed.

This is a health and safety issue. There are foreseeable future events regarding the dangerous conditions. There is also compensation tied to whatever happens.

The theory behind the law is pertinent for today. The particular example is for that previous era.

Exodus 21:33–34 **Let's say a man leaves a pit open or he digs a pit, but does not take any safety precautions, and an ox or donkey falls into the pit—the owner of the pit will need to make good on this loss. He will restore the animal's owner with silver and he will keep the animal which died.** (Kukis paraphrase)

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Exodus 21:35–36 is all about shared responsibility.

The *Jewish* Bibles place Exodus 22:1 at the end of this chapter as 21:37 (which will be shown in the translations below). Many of the Catholic Bibles follow the Jewish verse numbering here. This adjustment to the verse numbering does make more sense.

**And when strikes down an ox of a man an ox of his associate and he kills [it] and they have sold the ox the living [one] and they have divided the silver and the dead [animal] they will divide. Or if he is known that [the] ox [is] apt to gore him from yesterday three days ago and has not kept him [in] the owners, making good he will make good, an ox in exchange for an ox, and the dead [animal] is to him."**

Exodus  
21:35–36

**When a man's ox strikes down the ox of his associate and kills [it], they will sell the living ox and divide the silver as well as divide up the dead [ox]. But, if it is known that the ox [is] apt to gore [and this has been known] for awhile and that his owner has not kept him [isolated], then [the owner of the ox] will make good [for all the damage], [giving] an ox [or its equivalent] for an ox, and he [keeps] the dead [ox]."**

**If one man's ox strikes down another man's ox and kills it, the men will sell the living ox and split the cash and split the dead ox. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring, then the owner of that ox must make full restitution for the dead ox. He will cover its cost and keep the dead ox."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And when strikes down an ox of a man an ox of his associate and he kills [it] and they have sold the ox the living [one] and they have divided the silver and the dead [animal] they will divide. Or if he is known that [the] ox [is] apt to gore him from yesterday three days ago and has not kept him [in] the owners, making good he will make good, an ox in exchange for an ox, and the dead [animal] is to him."
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And if the ox of one man hurt a neighbour's ox that it die, they shall sell the living ox and divide the money; and that which is dead they shall also divide. But if it be known that the ox gored in time past and his owner did not keep him in, paying he shall pay ox for ox, and the dead one shall be his. If a man steal an ox or a lamb, and kill or sell it, he shall repay five oxen for the ox, and four sheep for the lamb.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And when an ox woundeth his neighbour's ox, and he die, they shall sell the living ox, and divide the price, and the price of the dead one shall they also divide. But if it hath been known that the ox was wont to gore in time past, and his master did not restrain him, he shall surely deliver ox for ox; but the carcass and the skin shall be his. When a man stealeth an ox or a sheep, and killeth or selleth it, five oxen shall he make good for one ox, because he hath hindered him from his ploughing; and four sheep for one, because he hath impoverished him by his theft, and not done service by it.
Revised Douay-Rheims	If one man's ox gore another man's ox, and he die: they shall sell the live ox, and shall divide the price, and the carcass of that which died they shall part between them: But if he knew that his ox was wont to push yesterday and the day before, and his master did not keep him in: he shall pay ox for ox, and shall take the whole carcass.
Douay-Rheims 1899 (Amer.)	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	"If one man's bull injures another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live bull, and divide its price; and they shall also divide the dead animal. Or if it is known that the bull was in the habit of goring in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall surely pay bull for bull, and the dead animal shall be his own.
V. Alexander's Aramaic T.	.
Plain English Aramaic Bible	.
Lamsa's Peshitta (Syriac)	And if one mans ox gores another mans ox so that it dies; then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money; and the dead ox also they shall divide. But if it be known that the ox has been in the habit of goring, and his owner has not kept it in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead animal shall belong to him.
Updated Brenton (Greek)	And if any man's bull gore the bull of his neighbour, and it die, they shall sell the living bull and divide the money, and they shall divide the dead bull. But if the bull be known to have been given to goring in time past, and they have testified to his owner, and he have not removed him, he shall repay bull for bull, but the dead shall be his own.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And if one man's ox does damage to another man's ox, causing its death, then the living ox is to be exchanged for money, and division made of the price of it, and of the price of the dead one. But if it is common knowledge that the ox has frequently done such damage in the past, and its owner has not kept it under control, he will have to give ox for ox; and the dead beast will be his.
Easy English	If one man's male cow attacks another man's male cow, it may die. Then they must sell the animal that is alive. Each man can have half of the money and half of the dead animal. But perhaps that male cow has attacked another animal before. Someone has told the animal's master about this, but he has not listened. He has not kept the animal in a safe place. So he must pay the other man for the loss of his animal. But he can keep the dead animal for himself.
Easy-to-Read Version—2001	.
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	“If one man’s bull kills another man’s bull, they should sell the bull that is alive. Both men will get half of the money that comes from selling the bull, and both men will also get half of the bull that was killed. But if a man’s bull has hurt other animals in the past, that owner is responsible for his bull. If his bull kills another bull, he is guilty because he allowed the bull to be free. That man must pay bull for bull. He must trade his bull for the bull that was killed.
God’s Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	If someone's bull kills someone else's bull, the two of them shall sell the live bull and divide the money; they shall also divide up the meat from the dead animal. But if it was known that the bull had been in the habit of attacking and its owner did not keep it penned up, he must make good the loss by giving the other man a live bull, but he may keep the dead animal.
The Message	“If someone’s ox injures a neighbor’s ox and the ox dies, they must sell the live ox and split the price; they must also split the dead animal. But if the ox had a history of goring and the owner knew it and did nothing to guard against it, the owner must pay an ox for an ox but can keep the dead animal.”
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	“Suppose someone’s bull wounds a neighbor’s bull and it dies. Then the owner and the neighbor must sell the live one. And they must share the money and the dead animal equally. But suppose people knew that the bull had the habit of attacking. And suppose the owner did not keep it fenced in. Then the owner must give another animal to pay for the dead animal. And the dead animal will belong to the owner.
New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; dynamic translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	.
College Press Bible Study	.
Contemporary English V.	If your bull kills someone else's, yours must be sold. Then the money from your bull and the meat from the dead bull must be divided equally between you and the other owner. If you refuse to fence in a bull that is known to attack others, you must pay for any animal it kills, but the dead animal will belong to you.
The Living Bible	“If a man’s ox injures another, and it dies, then the two owners shall sell the live ox and divide the price between them—and each shall also own half of the dead ox. But if the ox was known from past experience to gore, and its owner has not kept it under control, then there will not be a division of the income; but the owner of the living ox shall pay in full for the dead ox, and the dead one shall be his.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	.
New Living Translation	“If someone’s ox injures a neighbor’s ox and the injured ox dies, then the two owners must sell the live ox and divide the price equally between them. They must also divide the dead animal. But if the ox had a reputation for goring, yet its owner

Unlocked Dynamic Bible	failed to keep it under control, he must pay full compensation—a live ox for the dead one—but he may keep the dead ox. If someone's bull hurts another person's bull so that it dies, the owners of both bulls must sell the bull that is living, and they must divide between them the money that they get for it. They must also divide between them the meat of the animal that died. However, if people know that the bull often attacked other animals before, and its owner did not keep it inside a fence, then the owner of that bull must give the owner of the bull that died one of his own bulls, but he can take away the animal that died and do whatever he wants to with it."
Unfolding Bible Simplified	.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'And if a man's bull should gore his neighbor's bull and kill it; they must sell the living bull and divide the money, then divide up the dead bull. However, if the bull has been known to gore in the past and his owner knew about this and failed to do anything about it; he must pay for the bull, and the dead one won't be his.'
Beck's American Translation	.
Common English Bible	When someone's ox hurts someone else's ox and it dies, then they should sell the live ox and divide its price. They should also divide the dead animal between them. But if the ox was known for goring in the past and its owner hadn't watched out for it, the owner must make good the loss, an ox for an ox, but may keep the dead animal.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	If one man's ox is wounded by another's, and dies of it, they shall sell the live ox and share the price of it, dividing the carcass of the dead ox between them; unless it has been known for some time past that the live ox was using its horns, and the owner has not kept it under control. If so, he shall restore ox for ox, and keep the whole carcass for himself.
Translation for Translators	If someone's bull hurts another person's bull with the result that it dies, the owners of both bulls must sell the bull that is living, and they must divide <i>between them</i> the money <i>that they receive</i> for it. They must also divide <i>between them the meat of</i> the animal that died. However, if people know that the bull often attacked other animals previously, and its owner did not keep it inside a fence, then the owner of that bull must give the owner of the bull that died one of his own bulls, but he can take away the animal that died <i>and do with it whatever he wants to do.</i> "

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Christian Standard Bible	.
Conservapedia Translation	If one man's ox fatally injures another man's ox, they will sell the live ox and divide the silver price between them, and will also divide the dead ox. But if that ox was known to threaten to gore other animals in the past, and its owner has not penned him in, he will repay an ox for the lost ox, and the dead ox will then belong to him.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	'And if the bullock of a man gores the bullock of his neighbour, and it dies, then they shall sell the living bullock, and divide the money, and they shall also divide the dead. But if its master know that the bullock gored formerly, and he did not guard it, he shall compensate with a bullock for the bullock, and the dead shall be to him.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
HCSB	"When a man's ox injures his neighbor's ox and it dies, they must sell the live ox and divide its proceeds; they must also divide the dead animal. If, however, it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not restrained it, he must compensate fully, ox for ox; the dead animal will become his.
International Standard V	.



Jubilee Bible 2000	And if one man's ox hurts another's that he dies; then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money of it, and the dead ox they shall also divide. 36 Or if it is known that the ox used to push in time past and his owner has not kept him in, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead shall be his own.
H. C. Leupold Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011	. . "If anyone's bull injures someone else's bull and it dies, the two parties are to sell the live one and divide both the money and the dead animal equally. However, if it was known that the bull had the habit of goring, yet the owner did not keep it penned up, the owner must pay, animal for animal, and take the dead animal in exchange.
Peter Pett's translation Unfolding Bible Literal Text Unlocked Literal Bible Urim-Thummim Version Wikipedia Bible Project	. . . . Or if it was known that the ox is a gorer from yesterday, day before, and his owner did not keep guard over him, then pay he will pay an ox for an ox, and the carcass will be his. If a man will steal an ox or a lamb, and slaughtered it or sold it, five heads of cattle will he pay for the ox, and four sheep for the lamb.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	<b>35.</b> When a man's ox injures the ox of his neighbor and it dies, they will sell the live ox and share both the money and the meat of the dead animal. <b>36.</b> Or if it is known that the ox has been in the habit of goring and its owner has not kept it in, he must make good the loss by giving his neighbor a live ox but the dead ox will be his. <b>37.</b> If a man steals an ox or a sheep and either slaughters or sells it, he must pay five oxen for the ox, four sheep for the sheep.
The Heritage Bible	And if a man's ox hurts another's ox, and he dies, then they shall sell the live ox, and half the silver; and also they shall half the dead ox. Or if it is known by seeing that the ox has butted in time past, and his lord has not hedged him in, completing it, he shall complete it, ox for ox; and the dead ox shall be his own.
New American Bible (2002)	"When one man's ox hurts another's ox so badly that it dies, they shall sell the live ox and divide this money as well as the dead animal equally between them. But if it was known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner would not keep it in, he must make full restitution, an ox for an ox; but the dead animal he may keep. (v 37) <sup>5</sup> "When a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for the one ox, and four sheep for the one sheep. <b>5</b> [36] In the Vulgate, ⇒ Exodus 22:1-31. [I know what the footnote is trying to say, but they do not really say it.]
New American Bible (2011)	When one man's ox hurts another's ox and it dies, they shall sell the live ox and divide this money as well as the dead animal equally between them. But if it was known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner would not watch it, he must make full restitution, an ox for an ox; but the dead animal he may keep. When someone steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for the one ox, and four sheep for the one sheep. 2 Sm 12:6.
New English Bible—1970	When one man's ox butts another's and kills it, they shall sell the live ox, share the price and also share the dead beast. But if it is known that the ox has for some time past been vicious and the owner has not kept it under control, he shall make good the loss, ox for ox, but the dead beast is his.
New Jerusalem Bible	If anyone's ox injures anyone else's ox causing its death, the owners will sell and share the money for it; they will also share the dead animal. But if it is common



New RSV	knowledge that the ox has been in the habit of goring before, and its owner has not kept it under control, the owner will repay ox for ox, and will keep the dead animal. 'If anyone steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he will pay back five beasts from the herd for the ox, and four animals from the flock for the sheep.'
Revised English Bible—1989	If someone's ox hurts the ox of another, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the price of it; and the dead animal they shall also divide. But if it was known that the ox was accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not restrained it, the owner shall restore ox for ox, but keep the dead animal.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If one person's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, they are to sell the live ox and divide the revenue from the sale; and they are also to divide the dead animal. But if it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring in the past, and the owner did not confine it; he must pay ox for ox, but the dead animal will be his. "If someone steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters or sells it, he is to pay five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.
exeGesés companion Bible	.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And when a man's ox strikes against the ox of his neighbor, and it dies, they shall sell the living ox, and they shall divide the silver; and they shall also divide the dead. Or if it was known that he was an ox apt to gore from yesterday and the third day, and his owner does not watch him, he shall pay ox for ox, and the dead shall be his.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
The Israel Bible (beta)	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Kaplan Translation	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.
Tree of Life Version	"If one man's ox hurts another's ox so that it dies, they are to sell the live ox and divide the price. They are also to divide the dead one. Or if it becomes known that the ox was given to violence in times past, and its owner has not kept it pent up, he must surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal will be his own. If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he is to pay five oxen for one ox or four sheep for one sheep. Traditional Christian texts number Ex. 21:37-22:30 as Ex. 22:1-31.

### Weird English, Old English, Anachronistic English Translations:

Alpha & Omega Bible	.
Awful Scroll Bible	Was a man's plowing beast to strike his fellow's plowing beast, even is it to have died, they are to have sold the living plowing beast, and they are to have divided the silver, and the one dying was to be divided. Is it to have been known, that the plowing beast is apt to gore, formerly, as three days ago - was his owner to retain it? - as to repaying he was to repay, plowing beast for plowing beast, and that dying is his.
Charles Thomson OT	.
Concordant Literal Version	When a man's bull strikes the bull of his associate and it dies, then they will sell the living bull and divide the silver for it, and, moreover, they shall divide the dead one. Or when it is known that it was a bull given to goring heretofore, and its possessor did not keep it in, he shall repay, yea repay bull for bull, and the dead one shall become his.
Darby Translation	.
exeGesés companion Bible	And if an ox of one man butts an ox of his friend so that he dies; then they sell the live ox and halve the silver;

and they also halve what died.  
 Or if it be known  
 that the ox butted three yesters ago  
 and his master guarded him not;  
 in shalaming, he shalams ox for ox;  
 and that which died is his own.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And if the shor ish (ox of a man) hurt the ox of a neighbor, that it die; then they shall sell the shor hachai (live ox), and divide the kesef of it; and the carcass also they shall divide.

Or if it be known that the shor hath habitually from mitmol (yesterday) gored, and his ba'al hath not kept it in the bull pen; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the carcass shall belong to him.

Rotherham's *Emphasized B.*

And when the ox of one man thrusteth the ox of his neighbour so that it dieth, then shall they sell the live ox and divide the silver thereof, and the dead ox also, shall they divide, Or if it was known that, an ox, was, wont to gore, before that time, and his owner proceeded not to put him under guard, he shall surely make good,—an ox for the ox, and, the dead one, shall be his.

Third Millennium Bible

.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

"If one man's ox injures another's so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the proceeds equally; they shall also divide the dead ox [between them]. Or if it is known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has not kept it confined, he must make restitution of ox for ox, and the dead [animal] shall be his.

The Expanded Bible

"If a man's ·bull [ox] ·kills [gores] another man's ·bull [ox] and it dies, they must sell the ·bull [ox] that is alive. Both men will get half of the money and half of the bull that was killed. But if a person's ·bull [ox] has ·hurt [gored] other animals in the past and the owner did not ·keep it in a pen [restrain/confine it], that owner must pay bull for bull, and the dead animal is his.

The Geneva Bible

.

Kretzmann's Commentary

And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, the one that did the damage, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide, both parties, in this case, bearing the loss equally, since it could rarely be determined which animal was the aggressor. 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. In this case the owner of the mean animal would be guilty of criminal neglect, of punishable carelessness, and would therefore have to restore to his neighbor the full value of the animal which was dead through the viciousness of his ox, only the carcass being his. To this day the right understanding of the Seventh Commandment demands that full restoration be made to one's neighbor, not only in case of theft, but whenever he has suffered damage, even through the agency of a brute beast.

Syndein/Thieme

.

The Voice

If a person's bull injures another's bull and it dies, then *together* they must sell the living bull and split the money equally; they must also divide the dead bull *equally*. Now if the bull already has a reputation for goring and the owner has not confined it, then the owner *of the living bull* must pay a *healthy* bull for the dead one, but he may keep the dead bull for himself.

### Bible Translations with Many Footnotes:

## The Complete Tanach

And if a man's bull strikes his friend's bull and it dies, they shall sell the live bull and divide the money received for it, and they shall also divide the dead body.

**And if... strikes:** Heb. יָגַף, shove, either with its horns, or with its feet, or whether he bit him with his teeth All are included in הִפְיֵגַג, for הִפְיֵגַג is only an expression of striking. -[From Mechilta]

**a man's bull:** Heb. שֵׂא-אִרְוֹ , a bull [belonging to] a man.

**they shall sell the live bull, etc.:** Scripture speaks of [two bulls] of equal value a bull worth two hundred [zuz] that killed a bull worth two hundred [zuz]. Whether the carcass is worth much or worth little, when this one takes half [the value of] the live [bull] and half [the value of] the dead one, the result is that each one sustains half the damage that death inflicted upon him. We learn that the tame [bull] pays half the damage, for from the equal ones [the bulls of equal value] you learn [how it is with] the unequal ones [bulls of unequal value], for the law of the tame bull is to pay half the damage, not more or less. Or perhaps, even if they were unequal when they were alive, Scripture mandates that they sell them both [and divide the proceeds of the sale between them]? [This cannot be true since] if you say that sometimes the damager would gain very much, or sometimes the victim would receive much more than the amount of the complete damage, for half the value of the damaging bull [may] exceed the entire value of the bull that was damaged. If you say that, the [law regarding the] tame bull is more stringent than the [law regarding the] habitual gorer [which is illogical]. You are compelled to say that Scripture is referring only to the ones [bulls] of equal value. It teaches you that the tame bull pays half the damage, and from the [law concerning] equal ones, you learn about the unequal ones, that for the one who is awarded half the damage they [the court] assess the carcass, and the decrease of its value due to the death, [and] he receives half the depreciation and leaves (B.K. 34a). Now why did Scripture state it in this language? To teach [us] that the tame bull pays only with its body, and if it gored and subsequently died, the one [owner] who sustained the damage receives only the carcass, and if it does not equal half his damage, he has a loss. Or if a bull worth a maneh [one hundred zuz] gored a bull worth five hundred zuz, he [the owner] receives only the bull, for the tame bull did not become obligated to obligate its owner to pay from the best of his property (B.K. 16b).

Or if it was known that it was a [habitually] goring bull since yesterday and the day before yesterday, and its owner does not watch it, he shall surely pay a bull for a bull, and the dead body shall be his.

**Or if it was known:** Or if it was not tame, but it was known that it was a [habitually] goring bull today and from yesterday and the day before yesterday, totaling three gorings. -[From Mechilta, B.K. 23b]

**he shall surely pay a bull:** The complete damage. [Midrash Hagadol from Mechilta d'Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai]

**and the dead body shall be his:** [I.e.,] the victim's, and in addition to that, the damager must complete it until the victim is paid his entire damage [due to him]. -[From B.K. 10b. 53b]

If a man steals a bull or a lamb and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five cattle for the bull or four sheep for the lamb.

**five cattle, etc.:** Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai said: The Omnipresent was considerate of people's honor. [For] a bull, which walks with its [own] feet, and the thief was not disgraced by carrying it on his shoulder, he pays fivefold. [For] a lamb, which he [the thief] carries on his shoulder, he pays [only] fourfold because he was disgraced by it. Rabbi Meir said: Come and see how great the power of work is. [For the theft of] a bull, which caused [the owner] to stop working, he [the thief] pays five. [For the theft of] a lamb, which did not cause [the owner] to stop working, [the thief pays] four. -[From Mechilta, B.K. 79b, Tosefta B.K. 7:3]

**for the bull...for the lamb:** Scripture repeated them [i.e., the mentioning of the bull and the lamb] to tell [you] that the rule of fourfold and fivefold payments applies only to a bull and a lamb. [From B.K. 67b]

Kaplan Translation

#### *Damage by Goring*

If one person's ox injures the ox of another person, and it dies, they shall sell the live ox and divide the money received for it. They shall also divide the dead animal. However, if the ox was known to be in the habit of goring on previous occasions, and its owner did not take precautions, then he must pay the full value of [the dead] ox. The dead animal remains the property of [its owner].

#### *Penalties for Stealing*

If a person steals an ox or sheep and then slaughters or sells it, he must repay five oxen for each ox, and four sheep for each sheep. This is Exodus 22:1 in the MT (?) and 21:37 here.

#### *its owner*

(Bava Kama 10b; Mekhilta). In both these cases, the value of the dead carcass is therefore deducted from the amount of compensation that must be paid.

#### *four sheep*

See 2 Samuel 12:6.

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If the ox of one man injures the ox of his neighbor so that it dies, then they will sell the live ox and divide its proceeds,<sup>74</sup> and they will also divide the dead ox.<sup>75</sup> Or if it is known that the ox had the habit of goring, and its owner did not take the necessary precautions, he must surely pay<sup>76</sup> ox for ox, and the dead animal will become his.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74tn</sup> Literally "its silver" or "silver for it."

<sup>75tn</sup> Heb "divide the dead." The noun "ox" has been supplied.

<sup>76tn</sup> The construction now uses the same Piel imperfect (v. 34) but adds the infinitive absolute to it for emphasis.

<sup>77sn</sup> The point of this section (21:28-36) seems to be that one must ensure the safety of others by controlling one's property and possessions. This section pertained to neglect with animals, but the message would have applied to similar situations. The people of God were to take heed to ensure the well-being of others, and if there was a problem, it had to be made right.

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and (if) the ox of a man smites the ox of his companion, and he dies, (then) they will sell the living ox, and they will divide his silver, (then) they must also divide the dead one, or if it was known that (that) ox was a gorer <previously>, and he does not safeguard him, his master will make :full: restitution, an ox (in place of) the ox, and the dead one will exist (for) himself,...

Charles Thomson OT If any man's bull gore the bull of his neighbour and he die, they shall sell the live bull and divide the money and they shall divide the dead bull. But if the bull be noted for having been heretofore accustomed to push with his horns, and this hath been made known to his owner, and he hath not shut him up he shall be fined bull for bull and the dead bull shall be his.

C. Thompson (updated) OT .  
Context Group Version .

English Standard Version	"When one man's ox butts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and share its price, and the dead beast also they shall share. Or if it is known that the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has not kept it in, he shall repay ox for ox, and the dead beast shall be his.
Green's Literal Translation	.
Modern English Version	If one man's ox hurts another's so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide its proceeds and divide the dead ox also. Or if it be known that the ox has had the habit of goring and its owner has not kept it in, then he shall surely pay ox for ox and the dead <i>animal</i> will become his own.
Modern Literal Version	.
Modern KJV	.
New American Standard B.	"If one man's ox hurts another's so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide its price equally; and also they shall divide the dead ox. Or if it is known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not confined it, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead <i>animal</i> shall become his.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Niobi Study Bible	.
Owen's Translation	.
Restored Holy Bible 6.0	.
Updated Bible Version 2.17	And if a man's ox hurts his fellow man's ox, so that it dies, then they will sell the live ox, and divide the silver [from the sale] of it: and the dead they will also divide. Or if it is known that the ox was in the habit to gore in time past, and its owner has not kept it in, he will surely pay ox for ox, and the dead [beast] will be his own.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
Young's Literal Translation	.
Young's Updated LT	"And when a man's ox does strike the ox of his neighbour, and it has died, then they have sold the living ox, and halved its money, and also the dead one they do halve; or, it has been known that the ox is one accustomed to gore heretofore, and its owner does not watch it, he certainly repays ox for ox, and the dead is his.

**The gist of this passage:**  
35-36

### Exodus 21:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced naw-GAHF]	<i>to strike, to strike down, to hit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

## Exodus 21:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, each man, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
rêaʿ (רֵעַ) [pronounced RAY-ahg]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** When a man's ox strikes down the ox of his associate and kills [it],...

We have a situation where one ox gores the ox of another man, and kills it. How should this be dealt with?

We are going to see where shared responsibility plays a part in the laws of God.

Let me add that, several of these situations require an immediate solution. The meat of a recently dead animal is to be harvested and eaten. There is no way that the people involved can wait for a court decision to straighten this all out.

## Exodus 21:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced maw-KAHR]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004



## Exodus 21:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chay (חַי) [pronounced KHAH-ee]	<i>living, alive, active, lively, vigorous [used of man or animals]; green [vegetation]; fresh [used of a plant]; flowing [water]; reviving [of the springtime]; raw [flesh]</i>	adjective; can be used as a substantive; masculine singular noun; with the definite article	Strong's #2416 BDB #311

**Translation:** ...they will sell the living ox...

The two men together will do several things together. First thing they do is, they sell the living ox.

## Exodus 21:35c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châtsâh (חָצַח) [pronounced khaw-TSAW]	<i>to divide [in half], to cut in half [two], to halve; metaphorically to live half of one's life</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2673 BDB #345
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced KEH-sef]	<i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3701 BDB #494

**Translation:** ...and divide the silver...

Whatever money they get from selling the living ox, they divide that between themselves.

## Exodus 21:35d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean *and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore*.

Exodus 21:35d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
châtsâh (חָצַח) [pronounced <i>khaw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to divide [in half], to cut in half [two], to halve; metaphorically to live half of one's life</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2673 BDB #345

**Translation:** ...as well as divide up the dead [ox].

They have a dead ox, on which is a lot of tasty meat. So, they divide up the dead ox, each taking half.

This is the outcome prescribed by Scripture. There is nothing which would prevent the men from coming to a slightly different solution, if it is mutually agreed upon. Primarily, these laws keep such a case out of the courtroom. Not every problem requires a legal solution.

Exodus 21:35 *When a man's ox strikes down the ox of his associate and kills [it], they will sell the living ox and divide the silver as well as divide up the dead [ox].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Here, no one is really at fault; however, one man loses his ox and the other does not. Under these circumstances, there is not necessarily to designate a guilty party. They both share in the loss. The live ox is sold and they split that and the dead ox is divided evenly and they take that home. One of the unfortunate shortcomings of our court system is that there is very little place for both parties sharing equally in the blame and the outcome. No-fault insurance is similar to this and counter suits are similar, however.

Many of these laws are an attempt to keep certain problems and situations from going into the courts. For instance, if this situation went to court and there were any delays, the meat of the dead ox would become worthless in the meantime.

Exodus 21:36a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ôw (אוּ) [pronounced <i>oh</i> ]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to be known, to become known; to be instructed, to be taught by experience, to be punished</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

## Exodus 21:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
naggâch (נָגַח) [pronounced nahg-GAWKH]	<i>accustomed [apt] to goring, addicted to goring; vicious, predilection [predisposition] for goring</i>	adjective	Strong's #5056 BDB #618
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
t <sup>e</sup> môwl (לִמְחָה) [pronounced t <sup>e</sup> MOHL]	<i>yesterday; and is used figuratively for recently, formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #865 (and #8543) BDB #1069
shil <sup>e</sup> shôwm (שְׁלֹשָׁה) [pronounced shil-SHOHM]	<i>three days ago, the day before yesterday</i>	adverb	Strong's #8032 BDB #1026

Literally, min plus the two prepositions should be rendered *from yesterday three days ago*; figuratively, we might say *the last couple of three days*; it is idiomatic for *at any time before, in the past, heretofore, before, from before*.

**Translation:** But, if it is known that the ox [is] apt to gore [and this has been known] for awhile...

However, let's say that the ox is already known by the owner to be overly aggressive.

## Exodus 21:36b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced shaw-MAR]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

All of the BDB Qal definitions: *to keep, have charge of; to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save life; watch, watchman (participle); to watch for, wait for; to watch, observe; to keep, retain, treasure up (in memory); to keep (within bounds), restrain; to observe, celebrate, keep (sabbath or covenant or commands), perform (vow); to keep, preserve, protect; to keep, reserve*.

## Exodus 21:36b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ba'ălêy (בְּאֵלַי) [pronounced <i>bah-ġuh-LAY</i> ]	<i>aristocracy, leaders, baal's, lords, masters; landowners, movers and shakers, supervisors, administrators, citizens, inhabitants; owners</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1181 (plural of Strong's #1167 & 1168) BDB #127

**Translation:** ...and that his owner has not kept him [isolated],...

It is not against the law to own an aggressive animal. However, a person with such an animal must take precautions so that his animal does not harm others. This owner, in this scenario, is not taking appropriate precautions.

## Exodus 21:36c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlêm (שָׁלַם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAHM</i> ]	<i>to make secure, to keep safe; to complete (finish); to make good; to restore, to requite, to recompense (pay)</i>	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #7999 BDB #1022
shâlêm (שָׁלַם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAHM</i> ]	<i>to make secure, to keep safe; to complete (finish); to make good; to restore, to requite, to recompense (pay)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7999 BDB #1022
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

**Translation:** ...then [the owner of the ox] will make good [for all the damage], [giving] an ox [or its equivalent] for an ox,...

If this is the case, the responsible party is the owner of the aggressive ox. He must compensate the other man for his dead ox.

## Exodus 21:36d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (תומ) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...and he [keeps] the dead [ox].”

God is fair. The man paid for the ox so he gets to keep all of the ox.

Exodus 21:36 But, if it is known that the ox [is] apt to gore [and this has been known] for awhile and that his owner has not kept him [isolated], then [the owner of the ox] will make good [for all the damage], [giving] an ox [or its equivalent] for an ox, and he [keeps] the dead [ox].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

What has happened here is the ox which killed the other ox had a tendency to do this and the owner was fully aware of this animal's predilection. Under those conditions, the owner of the live ox is determined to be the guilty party and must make full restitution to the one who lost his ox.

**Application:** There are these things called dog parks. Every person in one of those places has a dog or more than one dog and all of those dogs are on leashes. Let's say someone brings a dog into the park, but without a leash, and there are subsequent problems. In most cases, no matter what size the unleashed dog, the owner of the unleashed dog is considered responsible. All of this comes from this particular commandment from the Bible, given by God about 3500 years ago.

Obviously, these laws were not confined only to oxen. They had application to all livestock in general and these laws can further be extrapolated for application to our day and time. What is important that after we study all of the laws found in the Pentateuch that we realize that most of the laws on our books have nothing to do with these laws or their application. This means, therefore, that we might be better off with most of our laws repealed.

Exodus 21:35–36 When a man's ox strikes down the ox of his associate and kills [it], they will sell the living ox and divide the silver as well as divide up the dead [ox]. But, if it is known that the ox [is] apt to gore [and this has been known] for awhile and that his owner has not kept him [isolated], then [the owner of the ox] will make good [for all the damage], [giving] an ox [or its equivalent] for an ox, and he [keeps] the dead [ox].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We have two similar situations here but with different outcomes. In one case, two animals become aggressive toward one another, and one kills the other. When that happens, the dead animal is divided between the parties and the living ox is sold and those proceeds are split.

The second situation is, the remaining ox is known by its owner to be abnormally aggressive. The owner has not taken the proper steps to isolate this animal from others. Under this situation, the owner is 100% liable for the situation.

At this point, there is no particular reason to have a new chapter, as the material in the next two chapters is quite similar to what we have already studied. In many cases, the chapter divisions here are fairly arbitrary; and some translations present Exodus 22:1 as v. 37 in this chapter. This next verse is not really tied to what we just studied, except in terms of having a similar theme.

Exodus 21:35–36 If one man's ox strikes down another man's ox and kills it, the men will sell the living ox and split the cash and split the dead ox. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring, then the owner of that ox must make full restitution for the dead ox. He will cover its cost and keep the dead ox." (Kukis paraphrase)

Beginning of Document	Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines
Introduction and Text	First Verse	Addendum
<a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a>	Exodus folder	Exegetical Studies in Exodus

## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### A Brief Review of Exodus 21

I believe that the best approach to this chapter is a verse-by-verse review, where the entire chapter is seen as a whole.

The Bible translation which I used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other primary name for God is *YHWH* (also given as, *Jehovah*, *Yahweh*, *Adonai*, *Lord*, *JHWH*, *Y<sup>e</sup>howah*). In the Hebrew, this name is represented with the actual four Hebrew consonants יהוה (often referred to as the Tetragrammaton). The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word was recorded without any vowels. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message, uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation, both translating the same Hebrew consonants (יהוה).

The Ten Commandments are the most fundamental laws/prohibitions for man. They defined the proper relationship between man and God and between man and man. R. B. Thieme, Jr. referred to the Ten Commandments as the freedom code, as following them provided the greatest amount of freedom for any society. That is, two men could live next door to one another, and if they followed the Ten Commandments, then both men could live in complete freedom without encroaching on the life of the other.



The three *chapters* which follow the giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:23–23:9) detail how exactly these principles should be applied and enforced in day-to-day life. We have already looked at various ways that those chapters might be divided up in Exodus 20:22 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### Sections of Exodus 21:

- vv. 1–11 [Laws Related to Slaves](#)
- vv. 12–27 [Laws Related to Homicide and Personal Injury](#)
- vv. 28–36 [Laws Concerning Liability and Restitution](#)

Essentially what is found in Exodus 20:22–23:19 is the application of the law to society. These various applications include both legal and civil consequences.

### Laws Related to Slaves

Exodus 21:1 [“These are the right-rulings which you are to set before them:](#)

God continues speaking to Moses. The context goes back to the final section of Exodus 20, which should have been started as a new chapter.

Most other translations have *ordinances* or *judgments* rather than *right-rulings*. I believe that *judgments* is a better translation.

Interestingly enough, vv. 2–11 deal with slavery. Generally speaking, the Bible allows for two types of slavery: (1) voluntary slavery (where a person without many life options tries to get ahead by becoming someone’s slave; and (2) wartime slavery. When a country or city is defeated in battle, there is the problem of what to do with the defeated peoples. Apart from taking the land of Canaan, the Hebrew people were not a warlike, conquering people, who sought again and again to expand their borders. However, they faced outside aggression on many occasions. In David’s time, this was almost non-stop.

The Hebrew people were allowed to make slaves of the people whom they defeated but did not kill in war (again, Israel principally engaged in defensive wars). If this or that Philistine city decided to attack Israel, they potentially paid the price of being made slaves to Israel. If you understand Israel’s enslavement of people is based upon the aggressive actions of those people, the concept of slavery is not harsh-sounding. If a nearby nation did not want to be forced into slavery, this was accomplished by not attacking Israel.

Exodus 21:2 [“When you buy a Hebrew servant, he serves six years, and in the seventh he goes out free, for naught.](#)

*For naught* is better translated *for nothing* or *without paying anything*.

Hebrew slaves were generally voluntary. However, it would not seem too out of the ordinary for a person to be required to pay a judgment, not to have the funds necessary, and then place himself into slavery in order to pay the judgment. By this, a person (and his family) would not remain in debt for generations. They could work off most debt by becoming slaves to the person who owned their paper (that is, to whomever they owed the debt to).

No matter why a Hebrew became a slave to another Hebrew, the term of slavery continued for a maximum of six years. Every seventh year was considered a Sabbath year, and all Hebrew slaves were to be cut loose. At least, this is what the Law of Moses required. The people of Israel did not always follow the Law as they should have. One of their greatest areas of disobedience is the Sabbath year (the seventh year). They made up for this by *over-obeying* the Sabbath commandment (they wrote an additional 600 or so regulations to define how to follow the Sabbath). However, we are studying the Law as God gave it, not the Law as the Hebrew people sometimes incorrectly applied it.

Exodus 21:3 “If he comes in by himself, he goes out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.

Slaves may enter into slavery married or single; but they can only leave the way that they came into slavery. A male slave could not marry a female slave, and take her with him when he left (this example would be a Hebrew male slave and a female Canaanite).

Exodus 21:4 “If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children are her master’s, and he goes out by himself.

If it is the master who provided the slave with a wife, the wife and children belong to the slave owner, not to the slave. There are three logical options. (1) The slave can leave when it is legitimate for him to leave and leave his wife and children behind. (2) The slave can leave and then purchase his wife and children out of slavery (highly unlikely). Or (3) the slave can choose to remain a slave to his master, thereby retaining his wife and children.

Exodus 21:5–6 “And if the servant truly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children, let me not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him before Elohim, and shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl. And he shall serve him forever.

This is the option where the slave chooses to remain with his wife, children and his master. The slave makes a public declaration of this and then his ear is pierced with an awl, which is done at the door of the home. This hole, punched in the door, at exactly the height of the slave’s earlobes, is a constant reminder that this slave has chosen to stay with his master for the rest of his life. It would seem likely that the master would also affix an earring at this point, but that is not a part of the text. Otherwise, the hole in the ear would naturally fill in.

Exodus 21:7 “And when a man sells his daughter to be a female servant, she does not go out as the male servants do.

Part of the early traditions was, a family would continue saving up a dowry for their daughter (s) which would be offered to the groom’s family at marriage. However, there was a problem if they were unable to put such a dowry together. So, under difficult circumstances, a family might simply sell their daughter to another family. This does not preclude a marriage between the daughter and a male member of that family. That appears to be one of the options at this point.

In this passage, God makes it clear that a woman is not to be treated as the male servants are treated. She is not simply another servant in their home like the male servants are, regardless of his exact future with this new family.

Exodus 21:8 “If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who has engaged her to himself, then he shall let her be ransomed. He shall have no authority to sell her to a foreign people, because of him deceiving her.

The master may have purchased this woman with the idea of marrying her himself. However, if he later chooses not to marry her, then he is given limited options under the law. He must allow her to be bought by a family relative; and he may not sell her to a foreign people.

*Deceiving her* means, he takes her as a slave with the intent to later allow her to become his wife. If he changes his mind, that is considered deceit. This change of mind is what limits his options.

Exodus 21:9 “And if he has engaged her to his son, he is to do to her as is the right of daughters.

The master may have taken the woman in with the intent of marrying her to one of his sons (this is likely a part of the agreement made between the two families). If he does this, he must then treat her as a daughter-in-law and not as a female slave.

Exodus 21:10 “If he takes another wife, her food, her covering, and her marriage rights are not to be diminished.

If the woman is married—and I would assume to the master or to one of his sons—if another wife is taken, the first wife must not have her marriage rights taken from her. I believe that the third right is not a catch-all, but her conjugal rights. There may be some disagreement whether that includes more than just shelter, but shelter at the very least.

Exodus 21:11 “And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out for naught, without silver.

The woman has a right to food, clothing and conjugal rights. If the man does not provide those things for her, she can leave without any cost (remember, the master did pay for her to become his slave; and possibly a wife).

### **Laws Related to Homicide and Personal Injury**

Exodus 21:12 “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall certainly be put to death.

Given what follows, this sounds as if a man may have even waited for his victim and killed him.

Exodus 21:13 “But if he did not lie in wait, but Elohim delivered him into his hand, then I shall appoint for you a place where he is to flee.

When a person lies in wait to kill a man, that is pre-meditated murder. However, this second circumstance is when a killing is done in self-defense.

Exodus 21:14 “But when a man acts presumptuously against his neighbour, to kill him by treachery, you are to take him even from My slaughter-place to die.

In the third case, the killer devised a plot by which he would kill his neighbor. Even if he runs to a city of refuge, that will not be enough.

In any case, premeditation (or not) and self-defense are built into the law and affect the final punishment.

Exodus 21:15 “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.

A child who strikes either parent will be executed. Bear in mind, a parent may not be willing to turn his own child in for this act of disrespect. Let me suggest that, if a son became uncontrollable and the parents could not handle him, then some parents might be willing to turn in their own son to the courts.

If a child strikes either parent in public, then that child is very likely to be executed. If this is done in public, it is no longer up to the discretion of the parents.

Exodus 21:16 “And he who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall certainly be put to death.

Kidnaping here is also known as *man-stealing*. We have a different understanding of kidnaping today, when someone is snatched up to keep (such as a child); or someone is snatched up in order to ask for a ransom. In the time of this law, kidnaping was done in order to sell the victim into slavery. That was flat-out outlawed, with the death penalty being the end result.

Nearly all of the slaves brought to America—and certainly those who came here on slave ships—had been *kidnaped* (to use the word used here). What I am saying is, slavery as practiced in the United States was illegitimate from the view of the Bible.

The Bible recognizes two types of legitimate slavery: (1) a man sells himself into slavery or (2) people defeated in war could be made into slaves. However, what is outlawed by the Bible is capturing a man and selling him into slavery.

Critics of the Bible rarely understand the distinctions which are made, but so many of them claim that the Bible does not have any laws forbidding slavery. The slavery most often practiced in the United States (and elsewhere) was forbidden by the Bible. Exodus 21:16 forbids that sort of slavery, and it is a capital offense.

Exodus 21:17 “And he who curses his father or his mother shall certainly be put to death.

A person who curses his mother or father was subject to execution. If this occurred in public, witnesses may call for the execution. If it was done in private, children could be executed, but how many parents would be willing to turn their own children in?

Exodus 21:18–19 “And when men strive together, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be innocent. He only pays for lost time and sees to it that he is completely healed.

If two men are fighting and one strikes the other with a stone or a fist and puts him out (he is off his feet for a few days), then the person who put him there must pay for his lost time and see that he is taken care of until he is completely healed.

Interestingly enough, the person who inflicted the injury is in charge of overseeing that injured man be nursed back to health. Do you see how such a *punishment* may result in eliminating the antagonism between the two men?

Exodus 21:20 “And when a man strikes his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall certainly be punished.

The man who kills one of his servants would be punished (which could mean death). I don't know that this law has any parallels from other cultures.

There are a number of laws about slavery in the Bible which I do not believe have parallels in other cultures (that is, similar laws are not found in other sets of ancient national laws).

Exodus 21:21 “But if he remains alive a day or two, he is not punished; for he is his property.

The text here is somewhat confusing. The master strikes a slave, and he survives a day or two and then dies, is he not punished? A more accurate translation fixes this problem:

Exodus 21:21 But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., he] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., he] [is] his silver. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

So the slave is pretty much back to normal after a day or two.

There will be some circumstances where a slave-owner permanently harms a slave, and that slave-owner will have to free his slave. That law is coming up in this chapter.

Exodus 21:22 “And when men strive and they shall smite a pregnant woman, and her children come out, yet there is no injury, he shall certainly be punished accordingly as the woman's husband lays upon him. And he shall give through the judges.

Vv. 22–25 are often cited with regards to abortion, and I have seen this quoted by both sides of the abortion issue (by theologians who believe that abortion is allowed and by those who believe that abortion is absolutely wrong). Two men are in a fight, and a pregnant woman on the sidelines is jostled and she gives birth (it might take place

right then and there; and it may happen a few hours or days later). If there is no injury (mother and child are fine), then there would be a fine. A judicial verdict would determine the amount and from whom it should be paid. The husband might say, "He needs to give us \$20,000" and the courts might reduce that amount. The man responsible for harming the woman (causing her to prematurely give birth) will pay what the courts decide.

In case you have any doubts about the translation, here is a more literal rendering:

Exodus 21:22 *And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, she gives birth prematurely], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines; and he will pay [lit., give] as the judges [determine].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Key to understanding this verse is the fact that there is no harm as a result. This means that mother and baby (babies) are fine. Obviously, if the wife has early induced labor, then it would make no sense to think that there is no harm if her child dies. It would be a mistake to interpret v. 22 to mean, the mother is fine but her child (children) died when she gave birth prematurely.

Even though mother and child are fine, there is still a fine imposed. It says that the husband and wife determine the fine, but that the man who caused this will pay as the judges determine. So, the parents have in mind an amount that they believe is reasonable, and the judge modifies this demand (perhaps it is higher or lower).

Exodus 21:23–25 *"But if there is injury, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, lash for lash.*

However, if there is any injury—whether suffered by the mother or child—then the resultant punishment should be equivalent and appropriate.

This law applies, whether the injury is to the mother or to the child. There is nothing to suggest that only the mother's well-being is addressed.

This is a principle given by God. There is no discussion here about ensoulment (that is, when does the soul enter the body or affix itself to the body). It seems that the historic consensus among Jews and Christians is, ensoulment occurs at the moment of birth, when the child takes his first breath, and that God breathes soul-life into each and every infant. I lean toward this as being the case. Many Christians and Christian theologians today believe that the soul is a part of the body from the moment of conception. I don't know that the Bible clearly defines when ensoulment takes place. We know through science that the fetus in the womb can hear and respond to sounds and voice, appears to smile and frown, and apparently dreams.

This passage, vv. 22–25, has a point-of-view separate from that theological difference. The soul of the infant/fetus is not a part of the consideration. There is harm as a result or there is no harm. Fines and consequences are based upon what actually happens to the mother and to her child (children).

At this point, we return to another law regarding the treatment of a slave.

Exodus 21:26 *"And when a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he is to let him go free for the sake of his eye.*

Interestingly enough, although there is an order in these laws, it might not have been how we would have organized them. I would have placed vv. 26–27 after the master striking the slave in vv. 20–21. However, we have the equivalent punishment concept, which speaks of an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth, and that leads us into vv. 26–27.

If a master strikes a slave and there is permanent damage done to the slave, then the slave goes free as a result. If the master blinds him in one eye, the slave will go out from slavery.

Now, I have seen many a film on slavery in the southern states pre-Civil War, and inevitably, there is always a tremendous beating or a whipping delivered to a defiant slave. The film always takes this to the point of death—the slave in the film dies or he nearly dies. If still alive, the slave always suffers for a long time after and has permanent and deep scars.

Did such a thing take place? Probably on occasion. After all, the slaves brought from Africa were completely unwilling (and the circumstances of their slavery was anti-Biblical from the start, as we have already studied).

Let me suggest two things. First, believers in the southern states (the slave states) were born into this culture and the culture we are born into is often accepted by those who find themselves in the midst of it (whether slaves, slave owners, or others). The second thing which is true is, believers in the south had access to the Scriptures. How many slave owners read these Scriptures, looking to justify themselves, and found themselves condemned instead? How many pastor-teachers from this era studied these same Scriptures and then taught them?

Slavery began in the United States in August of 1619 and the Civil War took place in 1861–1865. In other words, the believers in the southern states had about 240 years to straighten out the problem of slavery. Man-stealing was not allowed in the Old Testament and it was punishable by death. The slave-trade in the United States was based upon man-stealing. As we have seen, the laws of slavery in the Bible are fairly clear. If believers accepted some passages of Scripture (such as, *slaves, obey your masters*) but ignored other Scriptures (those dealing with man-stealing or with maltreatment of slaves), that was problematic. We do not get to pick and choose unless the Bible gives us reason to (for instance, the dietary laws do not remain in effect in the Church Age; Sabbath observance is also not for the church).

On the one hand, we are not put here on earth to whitewash the devil's world. However, it was certainly the responsibility of pastor-teachers, in both the north and the south, to teach the passages which we just studied. The right thing to do would have been to individually manumit one's slaves or to provide them with a great deal more freedom (which, apparently, some slave owners did).

The United States of America had 240 years to figure this problem out, and because they did not, they brought war upon themselves—a bloody, vicious civil war, one which is still being discussed today. Good luck on finding any truly objective historical source on this topic.

Exodus 21:27 *“And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he is to let him go free for the sake of his tooth.”*

If the master knocks out a tooth, the slave goes free. Some physical punishment was allowed by the slave owner. However, there were limits, and this passage defines what those limits are.

### **Laws Concerning Liability and Restitution**

Exodus 21:28 *“And when an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall certainly be stoned, and its flesh is not eaten, and the owner of the ox is innocent.”*

We are also responsible, to a limited degree for our animals. The first time an ox gores a man or a woman, that ox is to be killed and its flesh not eaten. However, the owner is not fined or charged with any crime.

Exodus 21:29 *“However, if the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox is stoned and its owner also is put to death.”*

However, if the ox has done this before and the owner was warned, then he will be executed if his animal kills anyone.

Exodus 21:30 *“If a sin-covering is laid upon him, then he shall give the ransom of his life, whatever is laid on him.”*



What is called a *sin-offering* here is simply a specified sum of money paid to the family of the person who was killed. A judge makes the determination of what this amount should be and the animal owner pays that amount instead of forfeiting his own life.

Exodus 21:28–30 If an ox gores a man or a woman and that person dies, then the ox will be destroyed and its flesh will not be eaten. However, the ox's owner will not be held liable for the death. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring and the owner has been warned, then the ox will be destroyed and the owner executed. Now, if the owner pays a reasonable ransom for his life, then that will be considered sufficient. (Kukis paraphrase)

The man who owns the ox can purchase his own life by paying a large fine—presumably to the family whose father or son is killed by the ox.

Exodus 21:31 “Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this right-ruling it is done to him.

If this person's animal, known to be aggressive, has killed someone's son or daughter, there will be an award of the court made to the family. This is paid in lieu of the owner being executed. Now, remember the words, *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life*? These laws tell us that penalties should be appropriate but not necessarily the exact same thing. Such rulings are called by other translators *judgments*, indicating that a court of law is involved in the final ruling.

Exodus 21:32 “If the ox gores a male or female servant, he is to give to their master thirty sheqels of silver, and the ox is stoned.

If an ox gores (kills) a servant, the master is reimbursed for the servant and the animal is destroyed.

#### Laws About Restitution

We might better understand these as liability laws.

When it comes to a modern-day application, there are enough specifics given so that an outrageous settlement is not determined against the person who is liable.

Exodus 21:33 “And when 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,

A person might dig a pit in order to find water and establish a well on his property. However, the existence of a pit is potentially dangerous to others. The man must do something in order to keep others from falling into it, or their animals.

If a pit is dug, but no water is produced, then the owner of the land must fill the pit in (that is what is meant by the verb *cover*).

Exodus 21:34 the owner of the pit is to repay, he is to give silver to their owner, and the dead beast is his.

If the animal of a neighbor falls into the pit and dies, the animal must be paid for.

Another more literal translation of this passage may help with your understanding:

Exodus 21:33–34 When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [or, *fill it up (again)*], and an ox or a donkey falls in there, the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good. He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 21:35 “And when the ox of a man smites the ox of his neighbour and it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the silver from it, and also divide the dead ox.

If one ox kills another ox belonging to another person, then the live ox is sold. The proceeds from the sell are divided; and the dead ox is caved up and divided between the two owners as well.

Exodus 21:36 “Or if it was known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall certainly repay ox for ox, while the dead beast is his.

However, if the ox doing the killing is known to have done this before, then the surviving ox owner must pay for the dead ox and he may keep the dead ox (to eat).

Although the next chapter begins with a new topic, there was really no reason to divide these chapters at this point.

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

### Why Exodus 21 is in the Word of God

1. T
- 2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

### What We Learn from Exodus 21

1. T
- 2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

### Jesus Christ in Exodus 21

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Shmoop tends to be rather flippant.

### Shmoop Summary of Exodus 21

[The Book of the Covenant](#)

## Shmoop Summary of Exodus 21

- **21:1-11: Slave Law**
- Here we get some specifics: Male Hebrew slaves have to serve six years; children born to slaves remain slaves; female slaves can be used as concubines; and some slaves, if they don't want to be freed, can be enslaved for life. Bottom line: slavery was a huge part of ancient culture.
- **21:12-27: Violence Law**
- Punishments abound here. Unpremeditated murder gets you sent away, but premeditated murder, kidnapping, matricide, and patricide all get you killed.
- Notice how infanticide isn't mentioned at all. Why? Because child sacrifice was a reality. (But in 21:22, the author notes that injuring a pregnant woman and inducing miscarriage has a financial penalty.)
- Check out this passage in 21:20-21: "When a slave owner strikes a male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies immediately, the owner shall be punished. But if the slave survives a day or two, there is no punishment; for the slave is the owner's property." Yowza. Talk about walking a fine line between gruesome murder and property management. That's how these people thought, though. Slavery just was a part of life.
- P.S. Famous line alert! When the author talks about injuring a pregnant woman, he notes that, "If any harm follows [the woman's miscarriage], then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (21:23-25). There it is. Biblical justice in action.
- **21:28-36: Property Law**
- Basically, don't be dumb with your animals. If a crazy, wild ox you own kills someone, it's your fault. If a docile, nice ox kills someone, it's not your fault. Common sense type stuff.
- But check out how stinkin' specific the passage gets though: "If someone leaves a pit open, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make restitution, giving money to its owner, but keeping the dead animal."
- Well, we're glad we settled that. At least we get to keep the dead animal.

From <https://www.shmoop.com/exodus/chapter-20-verse-22-chapter-23-summary.html> accessed June 13, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter , entitled *The Exodus and The Wanderings in the Wilderness*.

## Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 21

### CHAPTER 11

Civil & Social Ordinances Of Israel As The People Of God - Their Religious Ordinances In Their National Aspect - The "Covenant Made By Sacrifice" And The Sacrificial Meal Of Acceptance  
Exodus 20:18-24:12

"The judgments" next communicated to Moses determined, first, the civil and social position of all in Israel relatively to each other (Exodus 21:1; 23:12), and then their religious position relatively to the Lord (23: 13-19)."

The Divine legislation begins, as assuredly none other ever did, not at the topmost but at the lowest rung of society. It declares in the first place the personal rights of such individuals as are in a state of dependence - male (21:2-6) and female slaves (vers. 7-11). This is done not only with a sacred regard for the rights of the person, but with a delicacy, kindness, and strictness beyond any code ever framed on this subject. If slavery was still tolerated, as a thing existent, its real principle, that of making men chattels and property, was struck at the root, and the institution became, by its safeguards and provisions, quite other from what it has been

## Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 21

among any nation, whether ancient or modern.

Then follow "judgments" guarding life (vers. 12-14), with crimes against which, the maltreatment and the cursing of parents (vers. 15, 17), and man-stealing (ver. 16), are put on a level. It is the sanctity of life, in itself, in its origin, and in its free possession, which is here in question, and the punishment awarded to such crimes is neither intended as warning nor as correction, but strictly as punishment, that is, as retribution. From the protection of life, the law passes to that of the body against all injuries, whether by man (vers. 18-27) or by beast (vers. 28-32). The principle here is, so far as possible, compensation, coupled with punishment in grave offenses.

Next, the safety of property is secured. But before entering upon it, the Divine law, Divine also in this, protects also the life of a beast. (Exodus 21:33-36)

From [www.biblestudytools.com/history/edersheim-old-testament/volume-2/chapter-11.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/edersheim-old-testament/volume-2/chapter-11.html) accessed June 13, 2019.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

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<a href="#">Introduction and Text</a>	<a href="#">First Verse</a>	<a href="#">Addendum</a>
<a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a>	<a href="#">Exodus folder</a>	<a href="#">Exegetical Studies in Exodus</a>

## Addendum

### The Mosaic Law (by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

I have included a handful of verses, using the ESV (capitalized) translation.

1. The Mosaic law is divided into three parts:
  - 1) The moral code — Codex #1 — which has the commandments related to the laws of establishment — like in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. This part of the Mosaic law is pertinent today as a legal demonstration of the laws of divine establishment;
  - 2) Codex #2 is the spiritual code, known in the King James version as the *ordinances*. It is a complete Christology designed to present the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and as the God of Israel. It includes everything from the structure of the tabernacle, the holy days, the Levitical offerings, and the modus operandi of the Levitical priesthood;
  - 3) Codex #3 is known in the KJV as the judgements. It presents divine laws of establishment designed to provide freedom and privacy for Israel. It was designed to protect their property, their rights, their privileges. It included the functions of the divine institutions, many practical and wonderful things such as diet, sanitation, quarantine, soil conservation, taxation, universal military training, and many other ahead-of-its-time principles.
2. It is very important to understand the recipients of the Mosaic law. This can be explained by three very simple points.
  - 1) The Law was given to Israel — Exodus 19:3 Leviticus 26:46 (**These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between Himself and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai.**) Romans 3:19 9:4 (**They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.**)
  - 2) The Law was not given to the Gentiles — Deuteronomy 4:8 (**And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?**) Romans 2:12-14 (Romans

2:14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.)

- 3) Christians — Church Age believers — are not under the law. The Law was not given to the Church. It is not an authorizing agent for any part of the royal priesthood — Acts 15:5, 24 Romans 6:14 (**For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.**) Galatians 2:19 (we, as believers in the Church Age, are members of the royal priesthood).
3. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law — Matthew 5:17 (**"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."**).
  - 1) Jesus fulfilled specifically, Codex #2, by His ministry on the cross.
  - 2) In effect, He actually fulfilled Codex #1 by His impeccability.
  - 3) It can even be said that He fulfilled certain stages of Codex #3 in the field of patriotism and the laws of establishment — Matthew 22:21. But the principle concept is that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law by His sacrifice on the cross.
4. Therefore, Christ is the end of the law for the royal family, for Church Age believers, for the royal priesthood — Romans 10:4 (**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**)
  - 1) And in effect there is a conflict between the royal priesthood of the believer and the former Levitical priesthood.
  - 2) The conflict is resolved by the annulment, the abrogation of the law. The law is not in function today.
5. Believers of the Church Age, members of the royal family, are under a higher law. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the badge of royalty. The filling of the Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of the higher law, the superseding law, the law which nullifies the Mosaic law — Romans 8:2–4 Galatians 5:18, 22, 23 1Corinthians 13.
6. The limitations of the Mosaic law.
  - 1) It cannot justify. The law was never designed to be an agent of justification — Galatians 2:16 (**...we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.**) Romans 3:20, 28 Acts 13:39 Philippians 3:9.
  - 2) The Mosaic Law cannot provide life and it cannot perpetuate anything. Everything related to the law died and disappeared — like the Levitical priesthood. The Mosaic law could not perpetuate the Levitical priesthood forever. So it cannot give life — Galatians 3:21 (**...if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.**).
  - 3) It cannot provide God the Holy Spirit — Galatians 3:2. God the Holy Spirit is provided — indwelling only — members of the royal family as the sign of royalty.
  - 4) It cannot solve the problem of the old sin nature — Romans 8:3–4 (**For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**).
7. The present purpose of the Mosaic law.
  - 1) Under Codex #1 we have a definition of freedom through the laws of divine establishment. Codex #1 is also designed to convince by divine standard that the unbeliever is a sinner and needs a saviour — Romans 3:20, 28; 1Timothy 1:8-10.
  - 2) Codex #2 is designed to communicate the Gospel by illustration, by analogy. The theological term is *typical*. The sacrifices in codex #2 are *types* or shadows of Jesus Christ and His offering on the cross. Jesus is the fulfilment of these Old Testament sacrifices (we say that He is the *antitype*).
  - 3) Codex #3 provides for the national function of freedom under the laws of divine establishment: freedom through military victory, prosperity through free enterprise. These concepts are very important, but are adopted not by force but by the acceptance by the current culture). This is in contrast to our passage where the past purpose of the Mosaic law was for an authorizing agent for the Levitical priesthood. We saw that in Hebrews 7:11–12. These laws applied to Israel during a particular period of time, and many of them no longer apply (particularly the dietary laws, which laws preserved the people of Israel over 1500 years as a nation).

8. The Mosaic law is known by other nomenclature. For example, it is called the book of the covenant — Exodus 24:7–8 34:27–28 Deuteronomy 4:13–16, 23 8:18 9:9,11,15. There is an addendum to the Mosaic law in Deuteronomy 29. The prophecy of the breaking of the covenant is found in Deuteronomy 31, and also Jeremiah 22:9. The book of the covenant is the subject of Jeremiah chapter 11 but is not to be confused with the new covenant of Jeremiah 31.
9. Keeping the law was never a way of salvation, it was the way of human freedom and human prosperity under establishment. It was designed to provide the best possible conditions for the writing of the Old Testament canon, and it did that perfectly. There is constant reference throughout the Old Testament to the Mosaic law.

This doctrine was referenced in the [Introduction](#) to this chapter.

Regarding the original location of this doctrine: given the approach of this doctrine and the lack of actually writing out the corrected verse translations (I added those), I would suspect that this was the form of this doctrine given prior to 1970. Most of this doctrine is found in Lesson #24 of the 1969 Basics Series. It is also found in Lesson #15 of the 1968 2Corinthians study. By lesson #82 of the 1972 Hebrews series, Bob was beginning to edit and expand this doctrine. However, lesson #94 of the 1972 Hebrews series seems to be the actual source of this doctrine. Sometimes Bob would present these doctrines exactly the same for many years; often he would tweak a few points; and, by the 1980s, he appeared to go back and rewrite many of these doctrines from scratch.

This article was referenced at the end of [Exodus 21:22–25](#).

*Got Questions* tends to be a very good source of information for the believer who has one or two questions which they need an answer for.

### **What does the Bible say about abortion? (From Got Questions)**

The Bible never specifically addresses the issue of abortion. However, there are numerous teachings in Scripture that make it abundantly clear what God's view of abortion is.

Jeremiah 1:5 tells us that God knows us before He forms us in the womb. Psalm 139:13–16 speaks of God's active role in our creation and formation in the womb. Exodus 21:22–25 prescribes the same penalty—death—for someone who causes the death of a baby in the womb as for someone who commits murder. This law and its punishment clearly indicate that God considers a baby in the womb to be just as much a human being as a full-grown adult. For the Christian, abortion is not a matter of a woman's right to choose to have a baby. The baby is already present and living. Abortion is a matter of the life or death of a human being made in God's image (Genesis 1:26–27; 9:6).

What does the Bible say about abortion? Simply put, abortion is murder. It is the killing of a human being created in the image of God.

A common argument against the Christian stance on abortion is "What about cases of rape and/or incest?" As emotionally difficult as it would be to face a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, is the killing (or murder) of a baby the solution? Two wrongs do not make a right. Intentionally killing the unborn child is not the answer. Also, keep in mind that having an abortion is itself a traumatic experience. It seems nonsensical to add an additional trauma to the woman. Too, abortion can be a means of rapists covering up their crimes. For example, if a minor is molested and becomes pregnant and then is taken to have an abortion, the molestation could continue without penalty. Abortion will never erase the pain of rape or incest, but it very well may add to it.

A child who is conceived through rape or incest is made in the image of God the same as any other human. That child's life should be protected just as much as the life of any other human being. The circumstances of conception never determine the worth of a person or that person's future. The baby in this situation is completely innocent and should not be punished for the evil act of his or her father. Depending on the situation,



## What does the Bible say about abortion? (From Got Questions)

the mother might choose to raise the child. If she does not already have a community of support, she can turn to many organizations and local churches prepared to walk alongside her. Or she might place the child for adoption. There are many families, some unable to have children on their own, who stand ready to receive and love a child from any background.

It's also important to keep in mind that abortions due to rape or incest account for a very small percentage of total abortions: only one percent of abortions can be traced to cases of rape or incest (Torres and Forrest, cited by Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health and the Alan Guttmacher Institute in *An Overview of Abortion in the United States*, October 2001, [www.abortionfacts.com/facts/8#cite-1](http://www.abortionfacts.com/facts/8#cite-1), accessed 9/9/21).

Another argument often used against the Christian stance on abortion is "What about when the life of the mother is at risk?" Honestly, this is the most difficult question to answer on the issue of abortion. First, let's remember that such a situation is exceedingly rare. Dr. Landrum Shettles, a pioneer in the field of in vitro fertilization, wrote, "Less than one percent of all abortions are performed to save the mother's life" (Landrum Shettles and David Rorvik, *Rites of Life*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1983, p. 129). Dr. Irving Cushner, Professor of Obstetrics at the UCLA School of Medicine, when testifying before the U. S. Senate, was asked how often abortions are necessary to save the life of the mother or to preserve her physical health. His response: "In this country, about one percent" (testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution of the United States on October 14, 1981, quoted in *The Village Voice*, July 16, 1985).

Other medical professionals go further, stating that abortion is never necessary to save the mother's life. Over 1,000 OB-GYNs and maternal healthcare experts signed a statement in 2012, saying, in part, "As experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynaecology, we affirm that direct abortion—the purposeful destruction of the unborn child—is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman" (Dublin Declaration on Maternal Health, [www.dublindeclaration.com](http://www.dublindeclaration.com), accessed 9/9/21). Further, in 2019, "medical leaders representing more than 30,000 doctors said intentionally killing a late-term unborn baby in an abortion is never necessary to save a mother's life" ([www.lifenews.com/2019/03/05/30000-doctors-say-abortion-is-never-medically-necessary-to-save-a-mother-s-life](http://www.lifenews.com/2019/03/05/30000-doctors-say-abortion-is-never-medically-necessary-to-save-a-mother-s-life), accessed 9/9/21).

Second, let's remember that God is a God of miracles. He can preserve the life of a mother and her child despite all the medical odds being against it. Third, even in the small percentage of abortions performed to save the life of the mother, most of those abortions can be prevented by an early induced delivery of the baby or a C-section. It is extremely rare that a baby must be actively aborted in order to save the life of the mother. Ultimately, if the life of the mother is genuinely at risk, the course of action can only be decided by the woman, her doctor, oftentimes the father of the child, and God. Any woman facing this extremely difficult situation should pray to the Lord for wisdom (James 1:5) as to what He would have her do.

The overwhelming majority of abortions performed today involve women who simply do not want to have the baby. As indicated above, just two percent of abortions are for the reason of rape, incest, or the mother's life being at risk. Even in these more difficult two percent of instances, abortion should never be the first option. The life of a human being in the womb is worth every effort to preserve.

For those who have had an abortion, remember that the sin of abortion is no less forgivable than any other sin. Through faith in Christ, all sins can be forgiven (John 3:16; Romans 8:1; Colossians 1:14). A woman who has had an abortion, a man who has encouraged an abortion, and a doctor who has performed an abortion—all can be forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ.

From <https://www.gotquestions.org/abortion-Bible.html> accessed November 13, 2024. Some slight editing was done.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This *eye for an eye* passage is cited in the New Testament, when Jesus is giving the Sermon on the Mount.

This short exegetical study is referenced at the end of [Exodus 21:22–25](#).

The ESV is used below:

Up front, we should understand that Jesus is *not* undermining the Old Testament. He is *not* saying, “I need to modify and possibly even cut back on some of the laws which we read from the Old Testament.” He is clarifying the Law because of misconceptions which have arisen due to incorrect teaching.

### Jesus on “An eye for an eye.”

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Matthew 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'	As we have studied, <i>any eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth</i> , is all about appropriate punishment given out by a judge or in judicial proceedings. This was never about taking the law into one's own hands to exact the punishment you think it right.
Matthew 5:39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.	In a personal confrontation, one can escalate the confrontation or diffuse it. A slap here is an insult. Do you escalate the this confrontation and slap the person back or do you offer him your other cheek to slap? How many people nowadays, when they are faced some imagined insult (maybe a group of women are offended because someone refers to them as <i>gals</i> ; maybe someone is addressed by the wrong pronouns), escalate the situation? They are offended and they feel it necessary to strike back (even if that striking back is simply rhetorical)? Jesus is saying, “Do not escalate the situation; do not be offended.”
What is not found here is a personal and injurious attack which threatens one's safety. Sometimes, escalating a confrontation could endanger you more, not less. Each circumstance is different, but Jesus is teaching that becoming offended by an insult (being slapped) and responding out of emotion is not the right approach.	
Matthew 5:40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.	People also use the legal system against you. It is difficult when you believe that you are unjustly treated, but when you subject yourself to the legal system, then you are bound by it. Jesus is telling those hearing Him, “Do not make some principled stand over material objects.”
Matthew 5:41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.	Sometimes, you are forced into a situation that you do not want to be in. Somehow, this is not something that you can avoid. Jesus says, “Lean into it; do not make an issue of a minor inconvenience.”
Matthew 5:42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.	We are not to make an issue of material things. This does not mean that we cannot have things nor does it mean that we cannot take steps to protect our things (for instance, locking one's doors and having an alarm system). However, do not be so attached to material things that you cannot give to a person who begs you or desires to borrow from you (depending upon the situation).

To sum up, we do not need, as believers, to escalate situations, to be offended over minor things, or to place the ownership of material things as the highest good.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

## Josephus' History of this Time Period

### Antiquities of the Jews - Book III

#### CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF TWO YEARS.

#### FROM THE EXODUS OUT OF EGYPT, TO THE REJECTION OF THAT GENERATION.

#### CHAPTER 5.

#### HOW MOSES ASCENDED UP TO MOUNT SINAI, AND RECEIVED LAWS FROM GOD, AND DELIVERED THEM TO THE HEBREWS. <sup>(16)</sup>

6. Now when the multitude had heard God himself giving those precepts which Moses had discoursed of, they rejoiced at what was said; and the congregation was dissolved: but on the following days they came to his tent, and desired him to bring them, besides, other laws from God. Accordingly he appointed such laws, and afterwards informed them in what manner they should act in all cases; which laws I shall make mention of in their proper time; but I shall reserve most of those laws for another work, <sup>(11)</sup> and make there a distinct explication of them.

7. When matters were brought to this state, Moses went up again to Mount Sinai, of which he had told them beforehand. He made his ascent in their sight; and while he staid there so long a time, (for he was absent from them forty days,) fear seized upon the Hebrews, lest Moses should have come to any harm; nor was there any thing else so sad, and that so much troubled them, as this supposal that Moses was perished. Now there was a variety in their sentiments about it; some saying that he was fallen among wild beasts; and those that were of this opinion were chiefly such as were ill-disposed to him; but others said that he was departed, and gone to God; but the wiser sort were led by their reason to embrace neither of those opinions with any satisfaction, thinking, that as it was a thing that sometimes happens to men to fall among wild beasts and perish that way, so it was probable enough that he might depart and go to God, on account of his virtue; they therefore were quiet, and expected the event: yet were they exceeding sorry upon the supposal that they were deprived of a governor and a protector, such a one indeed as they could never recover again; nor would this suspicion give them leave to expect any comfortable event about this man, nor could they prevent their trouble and melancholy upon this occasion. However, the camp durst not remove all this while, because Moses had bidden them afore to stay there.

8. But when the forty days, and as many nights, were over, Moses came down, having tasted nothing of food usually appointed for the nourishment of men. His appearance filled the army with gladness, and he declared to them what care God had of them, and by what manner of conduct of their lives they might live happily; telling them, that during these days of his absence he had suggested to him also that he would have a tabernacle built for him, into which he would descend when he came to them, and how we should carry it about with us when we remove from this place; and that there would be no longer any occasion for going up to Mount Sinai, but that he would himself come and pitch his tabernacle amongst us, and be present at our prayers; as also, that the tabernacle should be of such measures and construction as he had shown him, and that you are to fall to the work, and prosecute it diligently. When he had said this, he showed them the two tables, with the ten commandments engraven upon them, five upon each table; and the writing was by the hand of God.

<sup>(11)</sup> This other work of Josephus, here referred to, seems to be that which does not appear to have been ever published, which yet he intended to publish, about the reasons of many of the laws of Moses; of which see the note on the Preface, sect. 4.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-3.htm> accessed June 13, 2019. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 2, Chapter 1.

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Exodus 21	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Regulations regarding slaves	
Now these [are] the judgments [or, <i>judicial decisions</i> ] that you will place before them:...	Now these are the judgments that you will place before the sons of Israel:...
If you purchase a Hebrew servant, he will serve for six years, but in the seventh, he will go out for free for nothing. If he comes in [as a slave] by himself, [then] he will go out by himself. If he [is] the owner [or, <i>lord, husband, master</i> ] of a wife, then his wife will go out with him.	If you purchase a Hebrew servant, then he will serve you for six years; however, he will go out free in the seventh year, owing you nothing. If he became your slave as a single man, then he will leave his servitude to you as a single man. If he entered into servitude to you as a married man, then his wife will go out with him—they will both be free.
If his master gives to him a wife and she bears sons and/or daughters to him, then the wife is [still the property of] her master and he [the slave] will go out by himself.	However, if his master gives him a wife (and, let's say, she also bears sons or daughters to him), she is still the property of the master (along with the children). Therefore, in the seventh year, he may go out in freedom, but by himself, as that is the state in which he became a slave.
But, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free;" then his master will bring him to the judges [lit., <i>elohim</i> ] [to say this] and he will bring him near to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve him [his master] forever.	However, if he clearly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children;" then his master will bring him to the judges, in order for him to make this public declaration. His master will also bring him to the door or to the door post, and then his master will bore through his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master forever after that.
When a man sells his daughter as a maidservant, she will not go out as the male slaves [to do the same work]. If she is evil in the sight of her master [or, <i>If she is displeasing to her lord</i> ], he may not reassign her, [and he may not] cause her to be redeemed by a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her by his deceptive practices.	If a man sells his daughter as a maid, she will not be subject to the same work done by the male slaves. If she disappoints her master, he still may not reassign her, selling her to a foreign people. He does not have the authority to sell her in this way.
If he assigns her to his son, he does for her in the custom of daughters. If he [the son] takes another [woman] to himself [in marriage], her food and clothing and her marriage rights must be preserved [lit., <i>may not be withdrawn</i> ]. If he does not do these three things for her, then she will go out freely without cost [freely no silver (required)].	Let's say her owner assigns her in marriage to one of his sons, and all the preparations are done for her. If the son takes on another wife in marriage, her support must be maintained (her food, shelter, clothing and marriage rights). If the owner does not do these things for her, then she may leave that family, freely and without cost.
Regulations regarding various altercations	
[If] one strikes a man and he has died, he will surely be executed. And when he does not lie in wait [to harm him], and Elohim has caused [them] to meet regarding his hand, I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.	If one man strikes another, so that he dies, the killer will certainly be executed. However, if he does not lie in wait intending to harm him, then I will appoint a place where he may flee to.

## A Complete Translation of Exodus 21

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
When a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, to kill him with guile, you will take him from My altar and [he will] die.	But, when a man acts treacherously against his neighbor, killing him with guile, you will take him from the altar and execute him.
The one striking his mother or father will certainly be put to death.	The one striking his mother or father will surely be executed.
[Regarding] one who steals a man—and he has sold him or he is found with him [lit., <i>in his hand</i> ] <i>—he will certainly die.</i>	If a person steals a man and sells him or is caught with the man in his possession, he will surely be executed.
Anyone who curses his mother or his father will certainly be put to death.	Anyone who curses his mother or father will surely be executed.
When [two] men quarrel and the one strikes his neighbor with a stone or with [his] fist, but he does not die but has lain down on a bed; if he rises up and walks in the street upon his staff, then the one striking [him] is acquitted. However, he will give [restoration] for his lost time and he will [see to it] that he is healed.	When two men are in an altercation, and one strikes the other with his fist, or with a stone or something else, but the other does not die, but is bedridden. Then his outcome will be monitored. If he is able to later get up and walk about outside with the aid of a staff, then the one who hit him will be acquitted of any crime. However, he will pay for his lost time and he will see to it that the man he struck is fully healed.
When a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and he [or she] dies under his hand, he will certainly be punished. But if [the servant] stands in a day or two, the master [lit., <i>he</i> ] will not be punished, for the slave [lit., <i>he</i> ] [is] his silver.	Let's say a man strikes his servant or his maid with a rod, and that servant dies from the blow, the master will certainly be punished. However, if the servant recovers in a day or two, then the master will not be punished, for the slave is his valuable property.
And when [two] men struggle and they strike a pregnant woman so that her children go out of her [that is, <i>she gives birth prematurely</i> ], but [there] is no harm, [the man causing this] will certainly be fined, as the husband of the wife determines; and he will pay [lit., <i>give</i> ] as the judges [determine]. If [there] is harm [which follows], then you will give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, and a stripe for a stripe.	Let's say that there are two men who are fighting, and one smashes into a pregnant woman standing nearby so that she gives birth prematurely. If there is no harm or injury that results, then the man who harmed the woman will be fined. The husband will suggest and amount and the judges may modify his demands. However, if there is harm or injury which follows (either to the mother or child), then the guilty party will pay, giving his life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, or a stripe for a stripe.
When a man strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his maidservant and he harms it, then he will send him out in freedom for the eye. And if he causes to fall the tooth of his slave or the tooth of his maidservant, he will send him forth in freedom for the tooth.	When the master strikes the eye of his slave or maidservant, and severely injures that eye, then the master must release the servant from slavery and give him (or her) his freedom. If he knocks out the tooth of a slave (or of a maidservant), then the master will set him (or her) free.

Liability for one's actions or one's livestock



A Complete Translation of Exodus 21	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
When as ox gores a man or a woman and [that person] dies, the ox will surely be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten, but the owner of the ox [will be] acquitted. However, if the ox [has] a predilection for goring most recently and [this] was declared to its owner, but he has not kept him [in and away from the public], and [the ox] kills a man or a woman, then the ox will be stoned and the owner executed. If a ransom is laid upon him and he has given a redemption for his life and all that was laid upon him.	If an ox gores a man or a woman and that person dies, then the ox will be destroyed and its flesh will not be eaten. However, the ox's owner will not be held liable for the death. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring and the owner has been warned, then the ox will be destroyed and the owner executed. Now, if the owner pays a reasonable ransom for his life, then that will be considered sufficient.
If [the ox] gores a son or a daughter, the same judgment will be done to him. If the ox gores a slave or a maidservant, then 30 shekels of silver will be given to the lord [of the servant] and the ox will be stoned.	If the ox gores a son or daughter, the same judgment will be applied to him; and if the ox gore a male or female slave, the ransom of 30 shekels of silver will be required (and paid to the owner of the slave). Again, the ox will be destroyed.
When a man leaves open a pit or when a man digs a pit, and he does not cover it [or, <i>fill it up (again)</i> ], and an ox or a donkey falls in there, the owner of the pit will make [the loss] good. He will restore [with] silver to [the animal's] owner and he [will keep] the dead [animal].	Let's say a man leaves a pit open or he digs a pit, but does not take any safety precautions, and an ox or donkey falls into the pit—the owner of the pit will need to make good on this loss. He will restore the animal's owner with silver and he will keep the animal which died.
When a man's ox strikes down the ox of his associate and kills [it], they will sell the living ox and divide the silver as well as divide up the dead [ox]. But, if it is known that the ox [is] apt to gore [and this has been known] for awhile and that his owner has not kept him [isolated], then [the owner of the ox] will make good [for all the damage], [giving] an ox [or its equivalent] for an ox, and he [keeps] the dead [ox]."	If one man's ox strikes down another man's ox and kills it, the men will sell the living ox and split the cash and split the dead ox. However, if the ox is known to have a predilection for goring, then the owner of that ox must make full restitution for the dead ox. He will cover its cost and keep the dead ox."
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Exodus 21			
	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught this	1992 Spiritual Dynamics (376)	#1875	Exodus 21:22-25
	1985 Ephesians (412)	#927	Exodus 21:22-23
	1985 Ephesians (412)	#980	Exodus 21:22-23
	1981 1John (429)	#55	Exodus 21:22-23
	1991 Israel in Conflict (840)	#95	Exodus 21:12, 22-25



Wenstrom	<a href="https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124">https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124</a> (Search "Exodus")
Jeremy Thomas	<a href="https://fbgbible.org/?s=exodus">https://fbgbible.org/?s=exodus</a>
Syndein	<a href="http://syndein.com/exodus.html">http://syndein.com/exodus.html</a>
Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on Exodus	<a href="https://www.gracenotes.info/exodus/exodus.pdf">https://www.gracenotes.info/exodus/exodus.pdf</a>
Todd Kennedy overview of Exodus	<a href="http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/books/exodus">http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/books/exodus</a>

\* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and **rebound** after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage).

R. B. Thieme, III has not taught this chapter in any available lesson.

