

Devotional for May 28, 2021

[adapted from a Gordon Conwell Seminary devotional]

Exodus 21:28-32 preserves a set of ancient Israelite laws known as “the laws of the goring ox.” The first time an ox kills someone, its owner is not liable. However, if the ox repeats the offense, the owner is guilty of negligence and his/her life is now forfeit. However, there is one way out.

The offended, that is, the one whose family member has been killed by the ox, may impose a ransom (or redemption payment) on the guilty ox owner. If the offender pays the ransom, his/her life will be spared. This ransom, rendered in Hebrew as *koper*, and as *lutron* in Exodus 21.30 of the ancient Greek Old Testament known as the Septuagint, was not granted automatically. Nor was it understood to equal the value of the lost life. Rather, it was a mitigated (lesser) payment that the offended could offer to the guilty party to spare the offender’s life.

What I find so astounding about this is that not only has God been incredibly merciful in that he is willing to accept a ransom - which in and of itself shows tremendous grace and mercy - but that God sent his very own son, Jesus Christ, to be a ransom for many!

May we be filled with a profound sense of gratitude to Jesus, who

body and blood!

And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

*(Verse 1 from the hymn, "And Can It Be, That I Should Gain?" by Charles Wesley)