

Exodus 21-23:13 Principles for Judging rightly

Intro: I came across an article in Good Housekeeping – Just for the record I don't regularly read that publication.

A) But I was researching – weird laws that are still on the books in the US

In Alabama ... it's illegal to drive blindfolded.

You know that means – someone tried it – didn't get too far – hit something!

In Arizona ... it's illegal for a donkey to sleep in a bathtub.

In the 1920's, a local dam broke, flooding a rancher's home. The rancher's donkey had become accustomed to sleeping in the bathtub, which filled with water and whisked him miles away. After working to rescue the animal, the town passed a law that prohibits donkeys from sleeping in the bathtub.

In Kentucky ... a woman cannot marry the same man four times.

Hopefully, third time really is the charm!

In Maryland ... sleeveless shirts are banned in public parks.

In Missouri ... bear wrestling is banned.

Really? Someone young knucklehead got dared – mauled – better make it a law

In Michigan ... you can't sell your vehicle on a Sunday.

This law was enacted way back in 1953: Religious reasons - According to the Wolverine State, time is better spent with family, friends or at church.

In Montana ... it's illegal to give a rat as a present.

Bad news if you were planning to have a pet rat in Big Sky Country: In Montana, it is unlawful to raise, sell, or give away rats except as food for reptiles, birds of prey, or both.

In New Jersey ... bullet-proof vests are banned while committing a crime.

Amended in 1999, this Garden State law prohibits people from wearing a bullet-proof vest while you're committing — or attempting to commit — a crime. If caught, a person can be charged separately for it!

In New Mexico ... "idiots" are banned from voting.

One law in the state of New Mexico prohibits "idiots" as well as "insane persons convicted of a felonious or infamous crime" from voting. To our knowledge, this crazy law isn't enforced elsewhere.

In Oregon ... it's illegal to go hunting in a cemetery.

Most people bring flowers to a cemetery, but apparently some brought guns back in the day. This became illegal in the Beaver State after a hunter was charged with harvesting an animal on cemetery grounds.

In Vermont ... it's illegal for women to wear fake teeth without their husband's approval.

Yep heard that right it's technically mandatory for women to get written permission from their husbands if they want to opt for false teeth.

Now admittedly those are some weird laws.

A)What prompted those laws to get written.

B)Well some people today have the same reaction when it comes to some of the laws written here in Exodus 21-23

C)They can seem odd to us in our culture. – When we read of an OX goring someone and killing them

1)Head Scratcher – We don't have pet OXES running around

But to the people living in that culture at that time they would make perfect sense.

A)And I think when we catch the heart behind these laws – they make perfect sense to us as well.

V.1 "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them:

B)Recall in our Study in Chapter 18 – Jethro Moses father in law advised him – YOU NEED HELP!

C)Need to appoint qualified men who can judge, and handle the daily affairs of the people

D)So that you can focus on the WORD AND PRAYER – and dealing with big problems

E)What we have here in Chapters 21-23 are **the guidelines for the Judges who would be judging the people**

**We will see that these laws were divided in 4 categories
Rights, Responsibilities for your actions**

Responsibility for your personal property Restitution

Chapter 23 ends with some random laws –

Rights for Servants V.2-11

- **Rights for male servants 2-6**

“: 2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ 6 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.

Now when people read in the Bible about Slavery – they immediately get confused. Why would God condone such an evil as Slavery.

A)There are several things to consider about that subject

B)#1 When the Scriptures mention something – it doesn’t necessarily mean that God condones it

C)Often times when God gives instruction about things like Slavery or Polygamy

1)He is not condoning it – but rather He is seeking to give direction to his people about the accepted practices of their culture

It is also worth noting that the Slavery that was being practiced in Ancient Israel was widely different to the Slavery that impacted our country and much of Europe.

A)1st of all unlike Slavery in our country the Slavery in Israel in Bible times was not tied to Race of ethnicity.

A)There were actually two kinds of Slavery

B)One kind was connected to War. When Israel defeated a nation – the captured rather than being killed were made to be slaves

C)They would become the work force working for the King

1)Builders and tradesmen in the Kings workforce – Building roads and buildings and water systems

D)None of the Hebrew people served in that form of Slavery.

The other kind of Slavery was related to debt or poverty.

A)A person might sell themselves into service to survive financially (more like indentured servitude).

B)If a family fell into financial difficulty – rather than lose their home or property which was their families inheritance

C)The father or one or more of his sons could become servants until the debt was paid off.

D)That is the type of Slavery our text is dealing with

Notice also that our text tells us there was a time limit to the servitude.

A)They would work for 6 years and then after 6 years the debt would be paid and the 7th year they would go free

B)Whereas Slavery in other countries as well as in our country was usually seen as a lifetime term.

C)In Israel the Lord also set up what was called the year of Jubilee – every 50 years all debts were erased and all slaves went free. Leviticus 25

In Israel Servants were part of the household structure.

A)Whereas in our countries and in Western Slavery – the slaves were socially and legally segregated.

B) Notice our text says: that if the servant comes in married – when his 6 years is up his wife and kids go with him

C) But if he gets married while there – his wife and kids technically belong to his master.

D) But he said I love my master, my wife and my kids – I will not go free he would also have the option of becoming a Bondservant –

E) Willing servant.

In Psalm 40:6 it is said of Jesus "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened [or pierced]; burnt offering and sin offering You did not require."

A) Jesus made himself a Bondservant or a willing servant

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:6-7

B) Interesting that Paul - Peter, John, as well as James and Jude all refer to themselves as Bondservants of Jesus

C) James and Jude were the ½ brothers of Jesus – thought him to be crazy – institution – until after the Resurrection

1) BONDSERVANTS of their Brother

E) Me and You – Rob the Bondservant – paycheck – Free

So we have the rights of a the male Servant V.2-6

Also the rights of the female servant V.7-11

⁷ "And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do.

B)"Why would a man sell his daughter as a servant?" It's quite simple, he's poor.

C)Life isn't good for him or for his daughter. So His daughter could have a much better life. She could be talking care off.

Now it was very customary for a dowry to be paid to the father.

A)Now a dowry wasn't such a bad deal. Actually, what a dowry was, was alimony in advance.

B)The father would figure how much it would take for her to live, if you should decide you don't want her after you're married her

1) because divorce was quite easy.

C)So the Dowry was paid to protect her if you decided to get rid of her

8 If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her.

D)She was free to go back to her family where there should be a dowry waiting for her.

9 And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 10 If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. 11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money.

If he buys her for his son betrothed, but his son falls in love with another woman and decides not to marry her.

A)The father of the son is required to take her in and treat her like a daughter – take care of her.

B)If he doesn't do that – she is free to go back to her family and they don't have to give back the dowry.

C)So in a world that treated women poorly and has property, God was setting up a system where women were protected –

1) Treated better than the rest of the World

D) Jesus in the NT takes this to another level - ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:27,28

E) The gospel liberated women radically. – Equal standing as members of the Body of Christ – **Peter called wives – Heirs of the Grace life**

Responsibilities for your actions 21:12-27

12 “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

A) Now here we see a reference to capital punishment – Murder someone the penalty is death.

B) This is not a new thought – Genesis 9 after the flood – God was setting up ground rules for this new society

**Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God, he made man. Genesis 9:6**

C) Man is made in the image of God therefore – if you kill a man - outright – punishment is death.

D) Here is what you are going to find about so many of these laws in Exodus 21-23 meant to make men think before they act.

D) If you know you are going to be held responsible for your actions – think twice about it – especially in taking a life – Makes perfect sense

13 However, if he did not lie in wait, (Not intentional) but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.

A) If somebody was killed unintentionally, it wasn't premeditated murder he could flee to a city of refuge and wait there for a fair trial.

B) There were six cities, we just read about them in Numbers - three Cities of Refuge on the western side of the Jordan River

1) three in the eastern side of the Jordan River

C)See in tribal societies, ancient tribal societies there was a designated family member called "The avenger of blood"

D)If you killed somebody in my family – I would be obligated to kill somebody in your family", the avenger of blood.

1)Your act destroyed our families honor – obligated to destroy your family honor as well.

E)But if it couldn't be proven that it was premeditated murder – there were these cities of refuge you could run to and request a trial.

14 "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.

If a man acted with premeditation and tries to run to the city of refuge – no trial is needed – put to death

He might run to the city of Refuge but you could go and take him – from the Altar – figure of speech – Cling to the horns

15 "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

A)Remember the 5th command to honor father and mother – days would be long – this adds no meaning to that – dishonor = death

B)MY Dad – I brought you into this world and I can take you out of it! ☺

More crimes or offenses guilty by capital punishment -

16 "He who kidnaps a man and sells him, (slave trade, sex trade) or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

17 "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

18 "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, 19 if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. Not die He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed. – provide for lost wages and hospital bills

20 “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. 21 Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property.

This principle is now applied to a master and his slaves.

A) In many other cultures, the master was held blameless if he murdered a servant, because the servant was not considered a person./ property

B) The Lord didn't want slaves to be looked upon as pieces of property but as humans made in God's image

1) and deserving of their human rights.

C) So if in disciplining a slave the master went too far and killed the person, the master was to be punished.

D) We aren't told what the punishment was; it was probably determined by the judges and depended on whether there was really intent to kill.

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.

The husband and judges get to determine the punishment and payment – Makes sense – logical – no courts no suing

23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. **Punishment fits the crime**

26 “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. 27 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.

Again the idea here is – your servant is a human being – not a piece of property which was so different from the rest of the world

Treat them like property and abuse them – hurt them – go free -

Responsibility for your property V.28-36

28 “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. 29 But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to

his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.

If you ox accidentally gores someone to death – the ox shall be stoned – but the owner is not held responsible – Dog bit in the face

A)But if the ox has a reputation for doing that. – And you are not watching the ox – you are held responsible

B)Ox and You are put to death!

C)Stories of Dog attacks – Owners held responsible

30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him.

Here it seems that if the survivors of the dead man wanted to show grace

A)They could arrange for monetary restitution in lieu of the owner's death, this was an acceptable settlement.

31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him.

The same principles were applied in the death of a minor. They were regarded as people with rights to respect as well as adults.

32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

30 Pieces of Silver was the price of a Slave – interesting that is the same amount that Judas betrayed Jesus for

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

You dig a pit and forget to cover it up – neighbors donkey falls in it. – You have to pay him the price of his donkey. –

Now you can keep the donkey in the pit you just have to figure out how to get it out of the pit. ☺

35 “If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide.

36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own. **You owe the price for the ox – but you get to keep the dead one - bbq**

PT Everyone is held responsible for your property. – Take care of your stuff

Ch.22 Restitution – No jails

“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

A) That would make you think twice about stealing right.

B) Usually it would be someone who was poor – who would get caught stealing – and so how could they pay back 4 and 5 fold?

C) The whole family was held responsible for the payment!

D) Think this caused parents to really instill into their kids – principles regarding theft and personal property

E) A whole family could be affected by someone else’s poor decisions

2 If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. 3 If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. **Night self defense – Day time see him – different**

He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall **restore double.**

5 “If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man’s field, he shall **make restitution** from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

A) Responsible for your animal – Marked by stones – animal wanders - make restitution

6 “If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, **he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.**

Remember back in 2020 how the Eldorado fire got started – Gender Reveal

A)lit a pyrotechnic device that generates an explosion of smoke in the color of blue for a boy or pink for a girl,

B)Started a fire that burned 23,000 acres and took the life of one firefighter – horrible accident

C)Resulted in the husband serving 1 year in Jail – 2 years probation and 200 hrs of community service

D)The wife was sentenced to probabtion and 400 hrs of community service and the couple was order to pay over \$1.7 million in damages

7 “If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man’s house, if the thief is found, he **The thief shall pay double.** 8 If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor’s goods. **Investigate to Determine if it was really stolen or if he was negligent – left it in a place easy to steal.**

9 “For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the judges condemn shall **pay double to his neighbor.**

10 If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it, 11 then an oath of the Lord shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor’s goods; and the owner of it shall accept that, and he shall not make it good.

Now this is interesting if you lend me your animal and something happens to it – dies or lost

A)And I swear on the name of the Lord – take an oath in the name of the Lord – that was a big deal – not done lightly

B) Revered the name of the Lord – then that was to be accepted – as being ok. – NOT AT FAULT

12 But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it.

13 If it is torn to pieces by a beast, then he shall bring it as evidence, and he shall not make good what was torn.

14 “And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good. 15 If its owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired, it came for its hire.

Now if I borrow your plough horse and something happens to it while I have it – I owe you a horse.

A) But if I hire you and your horse to plough my field or if you being a friend volunteer to help – bring your horse

B) And something happens to your horse on my property but you are there – I am not liable for that. -

Six times in the verses that we have read so far, the term "restore" or "restitution" is mentioned.

A) The Hebrew word is, listen carefully, Shalam.

B) It means whole or complete and it's related to another familiar Hebrew term, Shalom, which means peace or health or wholeness 1) or safety or completeness.

C) It's the same idea. Here's the idea behind all of these commandments of restoration.

It's more than just saying, "I'm sorry," No in order to bring peace, to bring Shalam, or Shalom.

A) You have to do something or pay back something

B)Because whenever the fabric of human relationship is torn by sin, it's the restitution or the compensation that sews it back together.

C)You just don't get off Scott free because it will cheapen the act that was committed, whether you meant to or not.

D)So those are laws relating to RESTITUTION

THE FINAL LAWS IN 22-23 ARE SORT OF RANDOM

16 “If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.

A)A Young couple engages in Sexual immorality – Fornication NT

B)The young man required to marry the girl – not because she is pregnant – but because they BECAME ONE

C) Not only does he have to marry her but he also has to pay for her dowry! \$5000

D)THIS WOULD PUT AN END TO CASUAL SEX AND HOOK UP CULTURE.

17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.

A)If her dad says, "You are creep! I am not letting you marry her – you took advantage of her.

B)He can do that – He can refuse her to you – but you still have to pay the dowry – You pay – either way you are doing to PAY!

C)I am liking this one – 3 grand daughters

More laws regarding capital punishment

18 “You shall not permit a sorceress to live. Witchcraft

19 “Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. Bestiality

20 “He who sacrifices to any god, except to the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed. Idolatry

21 “You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. Care for the Foreigners

22 “You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. Widows and the fatherless

25 “If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; **you shall not charge him interest.** 😊 Fairness and generosity in their cluture

26 If you ever take your neighbor’s garment **as a pledge Collateral**, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious. – Don’t take advantage

28 “You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

29 “You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30 Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. **Law of the First born and Frist fruits – THE BEST NOT THE LEFT OVERS**

31 “And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

A)This was a command to act differently than the animals, who freely scavenge dead carcasses.

B)God called Israel to be holy men, not to act like scavengers who tear at carcasses as animals.

C)PLUS “Animals killed by another were unclean for two reasons:

(1) the carnivorous beasts that tore it were unclean, and

(2) the blood of such a slain animal would remain in its tissues, leaving it unclean.

D)SO Instead, the people were to toss that meat to the dogs.”

Ch.23V.1-13

“You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

A)I've met some people who have a good sense of rumor not Humor. They love gossip. They love it.

B)THREE men on a fishing trip – confessing – 1st Gambling – 2nd stealing from company – 3rd Gossip – can't wait to get home

C)We don't take Gossip seriously – God calls it wickedness

2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; Avoid the mob mentality, peer pressure nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.

A)Imagine if people followed this advice – how our society would change for the better.

B)It was that mob mentality that yelled - Crucify him! Crucify him!"

C)"Don't follow the crowd," God says. You're holy. You're different.

3 You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

A)Justice is to blind.

B)the ancient Persian courts, the judges always wore a blindfold when hearing a case,

1)so that they wouldn't be influenced by the manner of dress.

4 “If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. 5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

Now, even Jesus said you are to love your enemies. It's just sort of the Old Testament equivalent of love your enemies.

A)See your enemy in trouble – be the bigger person and help them out

6 “You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute.
7 Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. 8 And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.
9 “Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Now, this is the second time God brings this the stranger. Give him a break.

A) You remember what it was like to be a stranger in a foreign land

B) I think this has incredible ramifications for us as Christians – toward unbelievers

C) Sometimes we as Christ followers can look on unbelievers with such disdain – and judgment – acting foolishly or worldly

Problem is we used to be just like them.

A) Paul said: Accept for the grace of God – there go eye.

B) We need compassion – Like Jesus – Multitude with compassion – sheep without a shepherd

C) One of the best things we can do is remember what it was like to be lost.

10 “Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. 12 Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

This is God's welfare program.

Let the poor go into the field on those off days and off years

A) It was meant to create a culture of generosity

B) And also a culture of trust in the Lord to provide.

13 “And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect **Wise** and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

Wisdom is knowledge applied

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,
16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:15-17