

Exodus 21

Word

I. Law Concerning Servants

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

- Judgments from God given to Moses to govern the people from Creator
- Three Categories
 1. **Moral:** Don't kill, Don't steal, Don't commit adultery [Eternal]
 2. **Ceremonial:** Circumcision, Sabbath, Dietary [Temporal until fulfilled in Jesus]
 3. **Societal** [closely related/sometime overlapping moral laws]
- Next three chapters establish the legal system in/for **God's people Israel**

2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.

- **Hebrew Servant:** How does one become a servant?
 1. **Poor** Lev 25:39
 2. **Sold by parent** Ex 21:7
 3. **A thief caught with no means to repay** Ex 22:3-4
- **Servants:** Required by God to be set free on the Seventh Year
- No servant is a servant for life *unless* they *willingly* choose to do so

3 If [the Hebrew servant] comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.

- Arrives single and stays single until 7th year: He is to leave alone
- Arrives married he may leave with wife

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.

- Wife given/Family started while serving? 7th year he may leave...alone
- **Provision by loving God...**

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...

- **If the Servant...**
 1. Loves Master
 2. Loves Wife
 3. Loves Children but time is served [6yrs.]

- **Process and Ceremony** to become an indentured [Bond] Servant
 1. Master and Servant go to judges to make things legal
 2. Master brings Servant to hard surface; i.e. door or doorpost
 3. Servant places head on wood
 4. Master pierces his ear and puts in an earring

Former slaves of Egypt with harsh taskmasters would remember blood of the doorpost
Now they willingly give themselves to a master who loves them

6b...and he shall serve him forever.

The Servant shall willingly serve his master forever Motivation was Love

- **New Testament Saints referred to themselves a "bondservants of Christ"**
- **Bondservant** gr. dü'-los from deō; Lit. To bind, tie, **knit to Jesus**

Galatians 1:10 ...do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a **bondservant of Christ.**

- **Writers of the NT addressed themselves as bondservants of Jesus**

Romans 1:1 Paul, a **bondservant** of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a **bondservant** and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

Jude 1:1 Jude, a **bondservant of Jesus Christ**, and brother of James, To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ...

James 1:1 James, a **bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ**, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

- **We are to be bondservants of God**

1 Peter 2:16 [You are free but do not use your freedom] as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

2 Corinthians 4:5 ...we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

- Jesus our example of being bondservants; i.e. willing servants of the Living God

Philippians 2:7 [Jesus] ...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

- **Prophesied of Jesus in OT:** Messiah would come as a bondservant of His Father...

Psalms 40:6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; **My ears You have opened.** Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. 8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart."

- Today Jesus calls us friends not servants.

John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

- Still, we are happy to be both friends and servants...

1 Corinthians 6:20 For **you were bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

- We seek to please God not man...

1 Corinthians 7:23 **You were bought at a price**; do not become slaves of men.

- **Continued:** Laws regarding Servants

7 "And if a man sells his daughter...

- **If a man sells his daughter?**
 1. Father too poor to take care of daughter/family
 2. Servant for 6 years and not more
 3. Possibility of marrying Master or Master's son

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

- **Man sells daughter as servant:**

1. If the master said he would marry her but reneges...she can be redeemed
 - Fellow Jew may pay money to set her free
2. If the master gives her to his son the master is to **treat her as a daughter**
3. If the son marries someone else along with her; son is not to deprive her of:
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Marriage rights

11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money.

- **NOTE:** Rights/Equality of /Compassion for...even servant women in God's economy

SUMMARY Law Concerning Servants

Lingering Questions

I. Laws Concerning Servants

21:7 "And if a man sells his daughter..."

- **If a man sells his daughter?**
 1. Father too poor to take care of daughter/family
 2. Servant for 6 years maximum
 3. Possibility of marrying Master or Master's son

II. Laws Concerning Violence

21:20 "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."

- Master beats servant to death for crime: Master Punished
- Master beats servant **for crime** and they live more than 1-2 days: Master Unpunished

This law is a deterrent to **not even think about being** overly severe with punishing servants

- **NOTE: "If a man..."** God does not condone beatings...
 1. God foreknows/foresees its eventuality...sinners will sin. Servants will steal. Masters will punish.
 2. God provides a law with such severe penalty that the master will think twice before beating at all

Considerations when looking at God's Law in OT [Exodus 21-24]

- Given to Israel in 1400BC after 400 years as slaves of harsh taskmaster Pharaoh
- Laws would separate Israel unto God and from paganism
- Israel had previously agreed to keep the law...before hearing the terms

Exodus 19:8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. 9 And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."

We sense the thick cloud as we study the law...

- **Also,** we are not under the OT Law today. Israel chose law over grace [see above]

Romans 6:14 ...sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Galatians 5:18 ... if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

- It is our sin that made the law necessary
- **The Law is for the lawless...**

1 Timothy 1:8 [Read] But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, **but for the lawless and insubordinate**, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane....

- OT Laws do not apply to us **unless:**
 1. **It is part of the Moral Law:** Do not kill, commit adultery, etc.
 2. **There is a NT parallel:** e.g. capital punishment
 3. **Falls under laws of the land** [Obligated to authority] that do not violate God's command

Servitude spoken of is not like slavery in Egypt
God does not command nor condone slavery as we generally understand slavery

- I.e. Horrendous slavery we overcame in our country is completely unlike the servitude found in OT
- E.g. Physical punishment of a servant in OT was for crime not for lack of production for the Master

God did not approve of slavery at all and., in fact, He condemned it. It was a great system in that day and God dealt with it. [JV McGee]

The Old Testament Laws took into account the inherent sin of man and made accommodations [through law and punishment] for the reality of what God knew man was capable of; i.e. self-annihilation. [NJC]

II. Law Concerning Violence

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

- **Capital Punishment:** Established after the flood

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Romans 13:4 ...if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

- **Do not kill:** Law not violated by this command
- **Implication:** Premeditated murder

13 **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.

- Accidental/Neglectful/even Passion Killing: **Manslaughter**
- **Cities of Refuge will be appointed:** Num. 35 and Josh 20

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.

Something is very different about premeditation/presumption

Psalms 19:12 [David] Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant **also from presumptuous sins**; Let them not have dominion over me.

- Premeditated/Presumptuous: Lack of Fear/Awe of God and Judgment
- **Premeditated/Treacherous murder:** No refuge even in church...**Execute them**

1st Degree Murder: No Quarter/No Mercy

Numbers 35:31 [Read] Moreover you shall take **no ransom** for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death...33 So you shall **not pollute the land where you are**; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel."

- **How polluted is our land from murderers not being executed?**

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

- **Strikes:** heb. *nakah*; i.e. slay, kill. Beat, slaughter
- **Strike a parent:** Execution [Harsh? How about this...?]

Deuteronomy 21:18 [Read] "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. 20 And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear."

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

- **Kidnapping:** Capital Offense deserving of Execution
- **One verdict against Egypt:** Kidnapping the children of Israel

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

- **Curse:** heb. *kä-lal'*; i.e. slight, trifle with, give little account, despise
- **Curse a parent:** Execution

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

- **Fight between two individuals and one wins:**

1. Loser is hurt bad/Loser confined to bed
2. Finally able to walk outside with a cane

18b...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 thoroughly healed.

- Winner is not punished physically but financially:
 1. Pay for lost wages
 2. Pay for his medical 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."

- Master beats servant to death for crime: Master Punished
- Master beats servant for crime; live more than 1-2 days: Master Unpunished

Perhaps this is a way to determine intent, with the idea that if the servant lived for several days, it was an indication that the master must not have intended to murder him. [Guzic]

This law is a deterrent to not even think about being overly severe with servants

- **Servant considered both...**

1. **Personhood:** Their death considered "murder" not something less
2. **Property:** They could be owned [only six years]

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.

- **Fight between two individuals:**

1. Fight induces a pregnant woman to give birth prematurely
2. The woman and baby end up being fine
 - Husband makes demand for restitution
 - Judges determine the final payment to the Husband/Wife

23 **But** if any harm follows...

- **But...**

1. If the woman is permanently hurt or dies
2. If the child is permanently hurt or dies
3. If both are permanently hurt or die...

23b...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.

- **NOTE:** Personhood of baby in womb; i.e. Fetus treated as person in God's economy
- **Penalty to fit the crime...** eye/eye, tooth/tooth, hand/hand, foot/foot, burn/burn, wound/wound, stripe/stripe.

Law is not intended to quell anger by means of cruel vengeance

This law is intended to **retrain our desire** to make the penalty more severe than the crime

- E.g. Not an **eye for a tooth** as we might desire in a time of anger [NJC]

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.

- Master strike servant of male/female servant and blinded: **Set free**
- Master strike jaw of male/female servant and loosed tooth: **Set free**

Different Law for Servants: Freedom instead of retribution

SUMMARY Law Concerning Violence

III. Animal Control Laws

- Principles/Laws/Penalties related to Intent and Neglect

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.

- **Ox [Pit bull] mauls someone to death the animal**
 1. Is to be stoned to death
 2. Is not to be used as food; i.e. Owner is not to profit
 3. Owner goes Scot-free

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.

- Ox [Pit bull] has **aggressive tendencies** that the owner knew of and
 1. The owner took no precautionary measures to confine
 2. Allowed it to get away and kill a man/woman

Both the Ox and Owner will be stoned to death

30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him.

- Family can decide to be compensated in lieu of owner being executed. Ransom

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.

- Ox gores servant
- Owner of ox pays **30 shekels of silver** to the master of the servant

Matthew 26:15 [Judas] "What are you willing to give me if I deliver [Jesus] to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

Zechariah 11:13 ...the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.

- **Price paid for the Son of God:** Price of a slave gored to death by an ox
- Jesus knows what it is like to be treated like we are worthless
- Jesus knew His true worth:

Matthew 3:17 ...suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

- Jesus was sold for the price of a servant that was pierced

John 13:3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin

and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- Jesus found His worth in what His Father said about who He was
- We find our worth in what our Father says about us...
 1. We are a **"Pearl of Great Price"** to our heavenly Father
 2. We are a **"Treasure"** to our Savior
- **Not good enough?** While we were at our worst Jesus died for us...

Romans 5:6 [Read] For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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.

These laws communicate the principle of "you-break-it-you-bought-it." [Guzic]

- **Man digs a hole and leaves it open or uncovered**
 1. Ox/Donkey [beasts of burden] fall in the pit
 2. Owner of pit pays owner of animal the price of a live animal
 3. Owner of pit gets to keep the dead animal

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.

- One man's ox gores another man's ox to death
 1. Sell live ox
 2. Divide the proceeds between each man
 3. Divide the meat of the dead ox

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.

- If owner of the ox knew of **violent tendencies** and took no precautions...
 1. He is to pay the owner of the dead ox *going rate of live ox*
 2. He gets to take the dead ox for himself

SUMMARY Animal Control Laws: God's Care for Us

Luke 12:6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins?[a] And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

