



The Book of EXODUS
Chapter 21 – 22
“Laws for Peace & Prosperity”

Chapter 21 – “Laws for Servitude & Personal Injury”

(v1-6) **Master servant judgment** – Further clarification is found in **Leviticus 25:39–55**.

The New Testament gives us insight into employee/employer responsibilities in Colossians 3:22-4:1.

(v7-11) Judgments regarding female servants.

> **Insight:** Though the Jews were permitted to own slaves from other nations, usually prisoners of war, they were not allowed to enslave their own people. Two scenarios are presented here: a man who voluntarily becomes a servant (Ex 21:1-7), and a woman who is sold to be a servant (vv. 8-11).

- If because of poverty, a Jew had to become an indentured servant, his master had to treat him humanely and release him after six years of service. If because of family affection the man wanted to remain in service, and the judges approved it, then he would be marked in the earlobe and remain a servant the rest of his life. However, he was never to be treated like a slave.

- A female servant wasn't automatically set free after six years. If a poor man sold his daughter to be a servant or a concubine,⁴ then the girl's father would receive the sale price, the girl would get a better home, and her husband wouldn't have to pay a costly dowry. If after becoming the man's concubine she didn't please him, somebody in her birth family could redeem her and she would be set free.

- If the man had chosen her for his son, and the son came to dislike her and married another woman, then the son's father had to be sure she was treated like a married daughter. That meant making sure she had clothing, food, and her conjugal rights (1 Cor 7:1-6). If the father failed to do this, the woman was free to return to her family home and was not considered a slave. (from *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament* by Warren W. Wiersbe)

(v12-17) “Death Penalty” -

- **(v12) Homicide** (Exception – Self-defense (v13) – Regarding unintentional homicide the penalty was banishment to an appointed place, which later God revealed as the cities of refuge (cf. Num. 35:6–24; Deut. 19:1–13).
- **(v14) Pre-meditation for murder**
- **(v15) He who strikes his parents**
- **(v16) Kidnapping**
- **(v17) Cursing one’s parents** - Disrespect for parents seen in physical and verbal abuse of them by their children was so serious it was designated a capital offense. Commandment 5 was a serious matter!

(v18-19) Personal injury – Perpetrator pays for victim’s loss of work (compensation) and all medical bills.

(v20-21) Personal injury to servants – same punishment to masters.

(v22-25) Personal injury by accidentally striking a pregnant woman and the baby is harmed – Punishment is determined by the judges; “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, etc.” (Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 5:38-48.)

(v26-32) Animal justice – The killer ox is to be killed, whereas, the owner may live if this is a first-time offense, but if the ox is known for trying to gore (mean spirited animal), then the ox and owner are to be killed (owner beware).

(v33-34) Pit diggers beware! Pits were used for the storage of grain and water.

(v35-36) Ox compensations.

Chapter 22 – “Judgments for Stealing & Crimes against Humanity”

(v1-4) Judgment for stealing oxen & sheep – Restoration compensation equals rehabilitation.

(v5) Restitution for grazing in a neighbor’s field/vineyard.

(v6) In the case of a fire that becomes out of control – restitution is to be given by fire starter.

- Warren Wiersbe writes, “The words “restore” and “restitution,” used six times in chapter 22 (vv. [1,3-6,12](#)), are a translation of the Hebrew word “*shalam*” that means “*to make whole, to make complete*” and is related to the familiar Hebrew word “*shalom*” (“*peace, health*”). It takes more than confession of guilt for an offender to make things right; it also demands effort on his part to compensate the people who were hurt. Only then can the torn fabric of relationships be mended and society be made whole.”

(v7-8) Thieves are to recompense double of what they stole.

(v9-13) For any kind of trespass, let the judges judge.

(v14-15) Understanding borrowing and its compensation.

(v16-17) The male was held accountable for premarital intercourse and the victim seen as one exploited by him, for which he paid a price (cf. Deut. 22:22–29).

(v18) Sorceress – A woman who practices the occult. (cf. Deut. 18:9-14; Rev. 21:6-8)

(v19) Death penalty for bestiality.

(v20) Sacrificing to other gods (cf. Deut. 13:1-11)

(v21) Be kind to strangers.

(v22-24) Do not afflict widows and fatherless children (James1:27 - *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*)

(v25-27) The law of lending to your poor brother, no interest, be gracious like God.

(v28) Honor God and rulers of your people.

(v29-30) Give first unto the LORD what he has given to you. (N.T. – 2 Cor. 9:6-15)

(v31) “*And you shall be holy men to Me*” – These laws, these judgments will set you apart as special people, a decent people, a compassionate people, a people of liberty and justice for all!

> Let’s live the CHRISTIAN LIFE! – Romans 12:9 – 13:14.