



Good evening Arising Church,

Tonight, we will explore Exodus 21, a chapter that promises to be both fascinating and enlightening. The story of the Exodus has captivated generations, both believers and non-believers alike. The early chapters have been immortalized in films like Cecil B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments" and "The Prince of Egypt," highlighting the miraculous events and the powerful theme of liberation from oppression. However, the beauty and significance of the Divine Law conveyed from Exodus 20 to the end of the book often go unnoticed and unappreciated. From Exodus 21 onward, these chapters are rarely read or understood, which is unfortunate because they reveal God's intricate design for shaping a nation and a family. If Exodus 21 through 40 were removed from our Bibles, many congregations might not even notice. Yet, Adonai declared in:

- **Deuteronomy 4:6-8 (ESV)**

"Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a

god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?"

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This evening, let us appreciate the profound wisdom and righteousness embedded in these often-overlooked chapters, for they are the foundation for a great nation and a wise people of understanding that Adonai dwells with.

Many Christians overlook this aspect of the Word because they mistakenly believe that the New Testament supersedes the Old Testament. However, this is a misconception, as the New Testament is deeply intertwined with the Old Testament and builds upon its foundational revelations. The New Testament should be seen as a continuation and completion of the Tanak, rather than a replacement. Western readers encounter a verse like:

- **2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV)**

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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Westerners assume that the primary Scripture being referred to is the Newer Testament, which is silly given that most of it was not written yet. The more accurate view would be that Paul was referring to the only Bible that his audience had and that was the Tanak and the few Apostolic letters already in circulation.

Thanks to the foundation laid at LCM, we have been trying to correct this false understanding for the last 14 years. We will continually remind you to look at the Law through the perspective of the scripture and not the vast majority of Christians. Psalm 119:18 is a perfect passage to help us in our perspective.

- **Psalm 119:18 (ESV)**

18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

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It is important to remember that the nation of Israel is a family and that family is roughly 50 days into their own liberation from slavery in Egypt. In last week's chapter and the accompanying session, Adonai spoke audibly from the fire on Sinai and every man, woman, and child in Israel heard YHWH verbalize the 10 commandments from the Heavens. Let's revisit the highest level summary of those commandments as a groom speaking to his beloved bride:

(READ SLIDE)

FOUR AND SIX

GOD {

1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

These four commands illustrate the way that the bride would now relate to Adonai as the groom.

MAN {

5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's... (anything)

These six commands illustrate the way that the bride would reflect the greatness of Adonai as the groom to the rest of the world.

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Many people in the West are acquainted with the Ten Commandments, even if they don't fully grasp the depth of their divine messages. Few recognize them as the profound wedding proposal they symbolize. Moreover, it's rare for individuals to understand that these commandments serve as the foundational framework under which all other revelations are communicated. You would be well served in understanding the Ten Commandments as the table of contents or the Jewish umbrella (*Choppa*) under which every other Law revealed to the nation fits neatly.



Scholars have categorized the Law into civil, ceremonial, and moral sections, which can aid in understanding. However, these divisions are subjective interpretations. We should resist the urge to simplify Divine revelation into arbitrary sections that might prevent us from fully engaging with every word from God. It is our position that every believer, regardless of their location or historical context, should engage with the original messages and determine how these Divine communications directly impact their own lives within their specific circumstances.

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We noted last week that Messiah said in Mark 12...

- **Mark 12:29–31 (NIVUK84)**

29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

You can see in Jesus' statement the first four commands of the Sinai Theophany summarized as loving God with all your heart and then the next 6 commands of the Sinai Theophany enumerated as loving your neighbor. It is important not to reduce the commands to generalized statements but rather understand all of the commands as aiming at these two principles. In short, ALL 613 commands are about love for God and love for your fellow man. None are irrelevant and any attempts at classifying the commands should properly account for the larger context of loving Adonai and loving your fellow man. This is the purpose of every commandment that proceeded from the mouth of God.

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If you labor under a different perspective on the Law, we invite you to further study by reading and engaging with a publication from the One Association of Churches titled: "Law Dawg". This book will help you with a proper understanding of how the Apostles viewed the Law and proper interpretation of Pauline statements that are errantly assumed to present a different view. In short, the Law of God (all 613 commands) are defined in the Bible as a Covenant of Love:



With this understanding as the basis for your engagement with the text tonight, there is another significant pitfall that we need to prepare you for so that you do not fall into the error of eisegesis, where one imposes their own ideas or biases onto the Old Testament. We are going to be dealing extensively with the concept of slavery. Slavery has existed in various forms within most cultures from the dawn of time. However, when modern audiences hear the word "slave" their primary associations with the term invokes only one image and that is of "Chattel Slavery". The very fact that we need to define this term for you, is proof of the need to differentiate between modern associations with slavery and what is being discussed in the Biblical text.

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Merriam Webster defines "Chattel Slavery" as slavery in which a person is owned as property of another **without any legal rights**. In this form of slavery, individuals and their descendants are considered legal property that can be bought, sold, inherited, or traded, with no recognition of their rights as human beings. This system was most notoriously practiced during the transatlantic slave trade, particularly in the Americas from the 16th to the 19th centuries. It was deeply racialized, targeting African populations, and was designed to be permanent and hereditary—meaning children born to enslaved people were automatically enslaved themselves. Chattel Slavery is distinct from other forms of slavery where enslaved individuals might eventually gain freedom or hold certain rights, chattel slavery was rigid and dehumanizing, stripping people of autonomy and identity.

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Chattel Slavery is not unique to the Americas and existed within ancient cultures such as Egypt. However, Israelites did not practice "Chattel Slavery" and the very chapter that we are reading tonight enumerates rights to slaves. This makes it important to understand the vast nuances that the Hebrew term for slave is imbued with. Consider this slide:

(READ SLIDE)

EBED

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word ebed is the most common term for a slave or servant, but it has a wide range of meanings depending on context [1]. This term can refer to someone in a lowly position as a menial slave, or to a high-ranking official serving a king [2]. Other Hebrew words like na'ar, šākir, and mešārēṭ are also used to describe various types of servants [1]. The treatment of slaves in ancient Israel was regulated by legal stipulations aimed at making their conditions more humane, especially for Israelite slaves [1]. Slaves could be foreigners bought or captured in battle, or Israelites who voluntarily sold themselves or family members into service to mitigate their own poverty [1] [3]. The semantic range of these terms presents challenges for translation into modern languages, as the same word can denote different levels of servitude or honor depending on the context [2] [4]. It's important to note that in some cases, being called a "slave" or "servant" of God or a king could actually indicate a position of privilege and authority, rather than oppression [2] [5].

[1] Myers, A. C. (1987). SERVANT. In *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (p. 927). Eerdmans., [2] Harmon, M. S. (2020). *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People: Tracing a Biblical Theme through the Canon* (D. A. Carson, Ed.; Vol. 54, p. 4). Apollos; IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press., [3] Haas, G. H. (2003). Slave, Slavery. In T. D. Alexander & D. W. Baker (Eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (p. 779). InterVarsity Press. [4] Omanson, R. L., & Ellington, J. (2001). *A handbook on the first book of Samuel* (p. 600). United Bible Societies. [5] Packer, J. I., Grudem, W., & Fernando, A., eds. (2012). *ESV Global Study Bible* (p. 23). Crossway

The differences between "Chattel Slavery" and the Biblical presentation are numerous but the example of Eliezar of Damascus is a good starting point so that you can wrap your mind around it.

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(READ SLIDE)

ELI'EZER, SERVANT

ELIEZER (Heb. ʿĕlt ezer) (also ELEAZAR)

1. The oldest and most trusted of Abraham's servants (Gen. 15:2–3). Ancient Near Eastern texts contain references to the practice of adopting servants as heirs in the case of childlessness, and the story of Abraham here reflects such influences. Later, Eliezer chooses a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:2).

Carrigan, H. L., Jr. (2000). Eliezer. In D. N. Freedman, A. C. Myers, & A. B. Beck (Eds.), *Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible* (p. 394). W.B. Eerdmans.

Abraham regarded Eliezer as part of his family, even considering him as a potential heir to his estate. Despite this, Eliezer is described as an "ebed," a term that can be translated as "slave." However, many modern translations prefer to use "servant" to avoid the negative connotations associated with "chattel slavery," which are not applicable to the biblical context. Unlike the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade, the concept of servitude in biblical times was fundamentally different.

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Tonight's chapter primarily relates to Hebrew servants or slaves and ensures protective health rights, socioeconomic rights, and familial rights to a nation that had endured the hardships of other forms of slavery. For the most part Hebrew servants or slaves could be viewed in the light of indentured servants that agreed to a set of working conditions for certain remuneration including food, protection and were promised a bonus at the end of their 6 years of service. Moreover rules were outlined to protect their familial status if marital unions occurred. Later in Exodus we will deal with foreign slaves (primarily acquired through being defeated in war) that were viewed more like property, but even in those cases the Biblical text

guarantees certain rights and protections regarding their health and marriage rights.

One of the largest differences between our associations with slavery and biblical associations is the familial aspect. Let's just take a quick example from both the Older and Newer Testaments:

- **Malachi 1:6 (ESV)**

6 **“A son honors his father, and a servant his master.** If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’

~

This verse in Malachi clearly equates a son's relationship with his father and an slave's "ebed" relationship with their masters. This kind of association underscores the extent to which servants or slaves were viewed as members of the family unit. This is distinctly different from being merely property without any rights to protection, provision, or value to existence as a human.

- **Galatians 4:1 (ESV)**

4 I mean that the heir, **as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave**, though he is the owner of everything,

In Galatians, the comparison between a child and a slave is highlighted once again. Both may have limited rights, yet they also enjoy certain privileges. As we delve into the text, it's crucial to set aside associations with "chattel slavery" and recognize the efforts to protect and preserve life within the Older and Newer Testaments of the Divine Revelation. This is because slavery in the biblical context is far different from your dehumanized associations. In fact, all human life is to be appraised as being in the image of God and the text continually makes provision for slaves to become family members.

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One of the more consistent views of the Law within Judaism is that the Torah aims at the preservation of life. Consider this slide:

(READ SLIDE)

THE LAW = LIFE

Deuteronomy 30:19–20 (ESV)

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **I have set before you life** and death, blessing and curse. Therefore **choose life**, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Deuteronomy 32:47 NIV1984

47 They are not just idle words for you—**they are your life**. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Ezekiel 20:11 (CJB)

11 I gave them **my laws** and showed them my rulings; if a person obeys them, **he will have life through them**.

(READ SLIDE)

THE LAW = LIFE, pt 2

Proverbs 12:28 NIV1984

28 In the way of righteousness **there is life**; along that path is immortality.

Proverbs 19:16 NIV1984

He who obeys instructions (Mitzvot) **guards his life**, but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die.

Mark 3:3-5 NIV1984

3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." 4 Then Jesus asked them, "**Which is lawful** on the Sabbath: **to do good** or to do evil, **to save life** or to kill?" But they remained silent. 5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.

Romans 7:10-11 NIV1984

10 I found that **the very commandment that was intended to bring life** actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

~

The Law is aimed at preserving life and inclining the human heart towards the author of life. The Bible repeatedly illustrates the Law as imparting life to otherwise dead situations. This is particularly profound when you consider that the Exodus narrative has portrayed Israel as a slave brought into the loving covenant of Marriage and given the privilege of a new form of service to her husband Adonai! Her new servitude involves reflecting the character of Adonai to the rest of mankind as His treasured possession. We covered this "new kind of slavery" when we reviewed Exodus 12 before doing chapter 13. Perhaps, you will remember this slide:

(DO NOT READ)

"NEW SLAVERY"

Exodus 12:23-26 (LSB)

²³And Yahweh will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and He will see the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, and Yahweh will pass over the doorway and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.

²⁴And you shall keep this event as a statute for you and your children forever.²⁵ And it will be, when you enter the land which Yahweh will give you, as He has promised, you shall keep this **new slavery**.²⁶ And it will be when your children say to you, 'What is the meaning of this **new slavery** to you?'

~

During that session we discussed the LSB's choice to refer to Israel's relationship to keeping the festivals as a "new slavery". The point being that the new relationship with Adonai was not like "chattel slavery" but rather invested life and freedom into the bride's loving service to her new master and husband, Adonai.

Remember that the translational choice was well founded. This was another slide from that session:

(Do not read)

“NEW SLAVERY”, AVODAH

6275 עֲבָדָה (*‘āḇō-dā(h)*): n.fem.; ≡ Str 5656; TWOT 1553c—1. LN 42.41–42.50 **work**, labor, i.e., the expending of considerable energy and effort, often in terms of specific duties, tasks, or jobs (Ex 1:14); 2. LN 37.1–37.32 **slavery**, i.e., the state of being owned and controlled by another and so in force labor (Ex 6:9); 3. LN 53.66–53.95 **ministerial duties**, i.e., service to God, with a focus on service by performing tasks (1Ch 25:1); 4. LN 53.1–53.15 **ceremony**, i.e., a formal religious practice intending to teach or cause remembrance (Ex 12:25); 5. LN 55.2–55.6

עֲבָדָה
work; enforced labor

service

slavery

laborious labor

slave labor

for every kind of service

duty

cultivated, cultivation

serve, serving

workers

~

We hope you are making the connection that Adonai freed his people from a dehumanizing form of slavery and brought her into a loving form of service where she would be treated as his bride. This bride voluntarily offers herself in a life of servitude to the will of her master and husband. Understanding this imagery helps to illustrate why Exodus 21 emphasizes the manner in which the bride of Adonai is to treat others as He has treated her and become a reflection of Him.

To further this point, a brief survey of Exodus and Deuteronomy reveal the frequent reminder that helps to ensure Israel's reflection of Adonai by stating:

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(READ SLIDE)

"REMEMBER YOU WERE SLAVES"

8x Hebrews are reminded of their own condition before being told how to treat other people:

1. Ex 22:21- Don't mistreat or oppress because this was your situation 50 days ago
 - Sounds like the golden rule. Do to others as you would have them do unto you
2. Ex 23:9- constant reminder of what God did for them
3. Deut 5:15 - Servant or slave they also got a sabbath
4. Deut 10:19 - Be kind to foreigners
5. Deut 15:15 - Remember you were slaves
6. Deut 16:12 - Same
7. Deut 24:18 - Same
8. Deut 24:22 - Same

Now that we have covered these vital concepts, we want to read the text and then expound upon it. As we do, keep the wedding imagery in your minds because these commands flow from the last six of the ten commandments and ensure that Adonai's bride (who is only 50 days into her new life) deals with the rest of humanity in a way that reflects him appropriately.

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Read and Pray

Exodus 21:1–36 (NIVUK84)

1 “These are the laws you are to set before them:

Now that we are into verse 1 of our chapter it is important to note that the setting is very similar to last week and yet it is distinctly different in some aspects. Last week, we saw Adonai speaking the words of the Ten Commandments audibly to the entire nation. This week what is being conveyed is the Lord speaking to Moses and Moses is relaying the

information to the people. The book of Deuteronomy makes this point very clear:

- **Deuteronomy 5:23–30 (NIVUK84)**

23 When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me.

24 And you said, “The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him.

25 But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer.

26 For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived?

27 Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey.”

28 The Lord heard you when you spoke to me and the Lord said to me, “I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. **29** Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

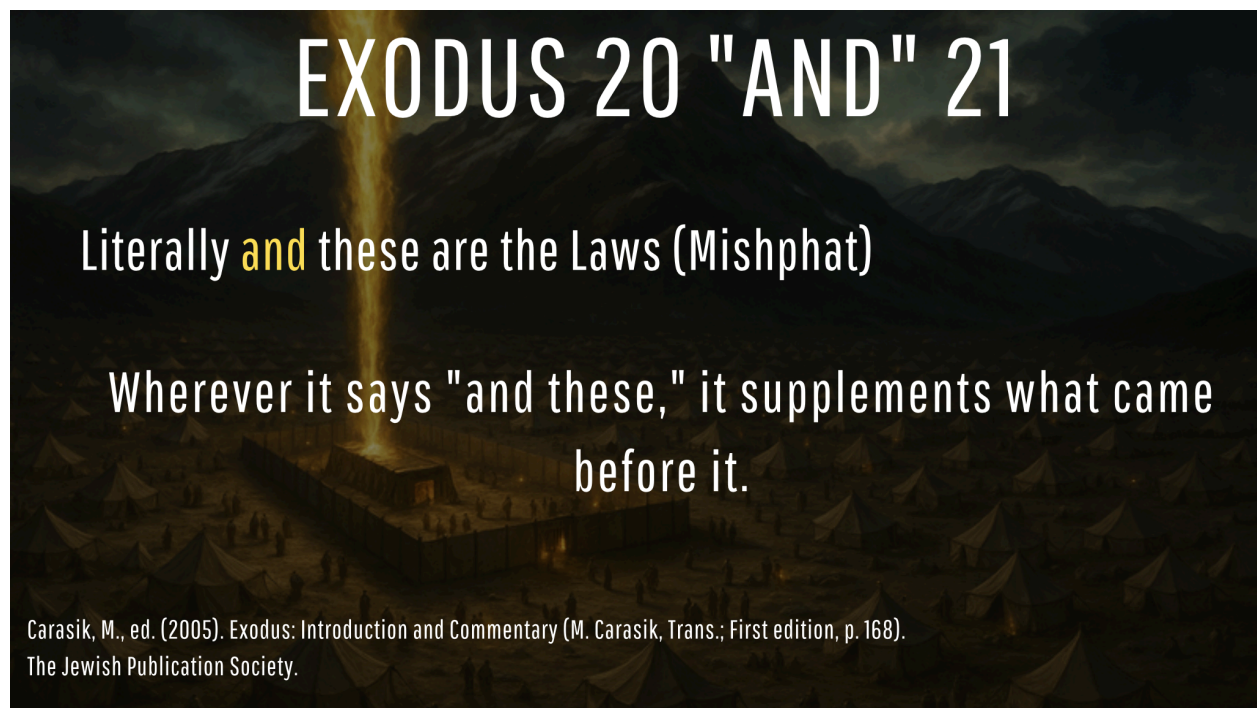
30 “Go, tell them to return to their tents.**31** But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach them to follow in the land I am giving them to possess.”

~

The 10 Commandments were proclaimed from heaven, with the people standing at a distance and Moses with them. Afterwards, Moses approached the thick darkness where God was. The Lord instructed Moses to have the people return to their tents while He conveyed His message to Moses. The 10 Commandments are unique because the entire nation heard them directly from God, unlike the rest of the Law, which was communicated through an intermediary at the people's request. This is beautiful for two reasons, first the people asked Moses to be the

intermediator between them and God, highlighting the future role of Messiah. Secondly, the Ten Commandments are connected to every other part of the Law with equal veracity. In fact, the actual Hebrew wording of our chapter tonight connects the two events. In the same way that Genesis and Exodus were connected by the Hebrew phrase "Ve Elleh" meaning "and these" so was the events of Exodus in chapters 20 and 21. Take a look at this slide:

(READ SLIDE)



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The 10 Commandments were verbalized from heaven and the people stood at a distance with Moses. Then Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. The Lord told Moses to have the people return to their tents while God instructed Moses what to relay to the people. The 10 Commandments are unique in that the whole nation heard them verbalized by God but every law given was spoken by God. The major difference being that the 10 Commandments had no intermediary and the rest of the Law was through an intermediary because the people requested it. This is one of the many ways that the giving of the Law foreshadows

Christ. There are a plethora of passages that could be cited here but perhaps, just two, one from the Older and one from the Newer Testament will suffice:

- **Job 9:32–35 (ESV)**

32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together.

33 There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me.

35 Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.

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The book of Job is considered by many to be among the oldest works in the Bible and it clearly displays Job's request for a mediator to help him relate to the Lord. Moses was the first figure in history to approach the thick darkness of God's presence in order to mediate for them on behalf of both God and the people.

- **1 Timothy 2:5–6 (ESV)**

5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Paul, makes it a point to describe Jesus in this fashion and declare that He is the "one mediator between God and men". This series of events is remarkable because they illustrate the peoples' desire for a mediator and Adonai's willingness to be represented in human form as Divine revelation is being given.

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2 “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.

We have just encountered the 2nd verse and we are already seeing an extraordinary difference between the way that slavery is thought of in our time and the way that biblical slavery operated. Chattel slavery had no provision for freedom after 6 years of service! In fact, outside of the biblical context of slavery most would never think of slavery as a temporary situation. The situation being described is more in alignment with what we think of as an indentured servant. In other words, it involves a situation where someone agrees to servitude for provision, protection, and compensation after a period of work.

The most obvious example would be the way that Jacob agreed to work for Laban for 7 years in order to obtain Rachel. These situations occur when someone does not have the necessary capital on hand to achieve a goal and they voluntarily offer their services for a period of time in order to ensure they have the sufficient means to achieve their goal at a later date. This is not to say that they are mere employees; that would not be accurate because this form of slavery integrates you into the household in a way that employment does not.

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Notice that the time limit set on a fellow Hebrew selling himself to you in this manner is 6 years. The pattern of 6 periods of work followed by a rest has been illustrated since the first week of creation. Moreover, there were 6 years of agricultural work followed by a 7th year of rest. There were even 7 cycles of 7 year periods followed by a 0 when debts were forgiven. The point is that Adonai's Law was intended to result in freedom not dehumanizing slavery.

It may be helpful to see the subject of a Hebrew man selling himself to another Hebrew man within the book of Deuteronomy so that you comprehend the circumstance that may give rise to this situation:

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- **Deuteronomy 15:8–15 (ESV)**

8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. 9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the

year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin. 10 You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

12 "If your brother, a Hebrew man **or a Hebrew woman**, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13 And **when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed.** 14 **You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him.** 15 **You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt**, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

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It should be quite obvious that we are not talking about buying people on the slave trading blocks. The situation that this Law concerns is when a brother Israelite is offering his servitude in exchange for room, board, and future provision. Notice that the person has to leave your home with substantially more than they entered your service with. Lastly, the constant reminder is present within this passage of the way that Adonai brought Israel out of dehumanizing slavery and into a "new kind of slavery" that allowed his bride to become one with his household. Adonai did this when He delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt and even abundantly provided them with treasures as they plundered Egypt. We are going to introduce you to a Jewish sage named Nahmanides, who lived in 13th century Spain, because his comments are insightful. This sage is also often referred to as "Ramban":

SIX AND ONE

NAHMANIDES

When you acquire a Hebrew slave. The rules begin with those about the Hebrew slave because letting him go free in the seventh year is a reminder of the exodus from Egypt mentioned in the first Commandment. "Bear in mind that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I enjoin this commandment [to free the slave] upon you today" (Deut. 15:15). In addition, it is reminiscent of the seventh day of creation, on which God rested. Not only are the seventh day of the week and the seventh year of a slave's service significant, but so is the year after seven sets of seven "years of remission," which is the jubilee year-for seven is a special number. The secret of all these sevens is the same, and **it is the secret of the duration of the world**, in Gen. 1:1-2:4. Hence this rule about the slave deserved to be first, for it alludes to great matters involving the history of creation.

Carasik, M., ed. (2005). Exodus: Introduction and Commentary (M. Carasik, Trans.; First edition, p. 168). The Jewish Publication Society.

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Ramban is restating much of what we have already told you, or rather, we are restating things he said prior to us; but you should notice that Ramban sees significance in freedom during the seventh year as a prediction of Adonai's dealing with the entire world. It would seem that Ramban believes that a day is as a thousand years and after 6,000 years of servitude Adonai will bring the world into a millennium with a liberal blessing!

3 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. 4 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.

When one of your fellow countrymen presents himself voluntarily as a slave the time period cannot exceed 7 years. At the conclusion of his servitude, he is to go away with a liberal blessing. If the man's wife came into the home with him as his service began then she is to be set free with him. However, if the man came in alone and you acquired a non-Hebrew wife for him or gave him one of your non-Hebrew servants as a wife, then the wife

and the children remain in the service of your home, even when the husband is free to pursue other employment.

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There is a reason that we used the words "non-Hebrew" wife.

Deuteronomy 15 states that a Hebrew woman who is a slave also goes free at the 7th year exactly as Hebrew men do. The wife in question in this passage is one that is not of Hebrew origin and who was provided by the owner of the estate. Remember:

- **Deuteronomy 15:12–13 (ESV)**

12 “If your brother, a **Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman**, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13 And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed.

Adonai did not permit a Hebrew man or woman to be enslaved for longer than 6 years for any reason except one, which we will cover later. The point here is foreign slaves acquired mostly through being defeated in war, were treated differently. The owner of the estate was responsible for protecting, feeding, and caring for them and they were a permanent responsibility and benefit to the owner of the estate. They essentially became part of his family and were expected to work on behalf of the family forever (see Leviticus 25:44-46).

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This raises the question, why and how would an occasion ever occur where the owner of the house would want to provide a non-Hebrew wife for one of his fellow Hebrews that offered himself as an indentured servant?

Additionally, why would the Hebrew indentured servant ever accept a wife that was a permanent part of his master's house? The most likely answer is that the master of the house hoped to persuade the Hebrew man to offer himself willingly as a lifetime part of the household out of love for the wife and the household who had provided her to him. This becomes apparent in the next verse.

5 “But if the servant declares, ‘I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,’ 6 then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the door-post and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.

~

Consider the statement: "I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free." This sentiment is difficult to associate with the form of slavery we are familiar with today. The type of servitude being referenced here is more akin to indentured service, where conditions were evidently favorable enough for someone to desire to remain in the household permanently. This could only arise out of a situation that was intended to elevate a man rather than oppress him.

The other truly striking part is that the ceremony to enact this provision in the Law involved being taken in front of witnesses and having your ear pierced on the door post of the home. Remember, this nation came out of Egypt approximately 50 days ago after covering their doorposts with the blood of a lamb. Both of these events are a "Remez" that point to a "new kind of slavery" that involves a benevolent master, loving husband, and a loyal wife. The whole concept of a slave or servant so loving the master that he wants to spend his life in service of that master brings to mind this Psalm:

~

- **Psalm 40:1–8 (ESV)**

1 I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

2 He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

It is not hard to imagine these verses applying to a Hebrew servant that was in distress, financial or otherwise, and rejoicing about how time with the Master put his life on a more firm footing

~

- **Psalm 40:3 (ESV)**

3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

Again, it is not hard to visualize these verses applying to a Hebrew servant who is now in a much better place as a result of time in the Master's house and jubilantly proclaiming to others about the benefits of the Master's house

~

- **Psalm 40:4-5 (ESV)**

4 Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after a lie!

5 You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

If you were indebted (and you were) and the Master offered to protect you, feed you, and even give you a wife to build a family, couldn't you describe that as "You have multiplied...your wonderful deeds and your thoughts towards us, none can compare with you!"

~

- **Psalm 40:6 (ESV)**

6 In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

The 1984 NIV even says, "my ears you have pierced" but we won't diminish the beauty of this parallel by linguistic arguments. The concept is so closely aligned with the concept of a bond servant that wants to remain in his Master's service forever that it is probably already obvious to you. Let's continue...

~

- **Psalm 40:7-8 (ESV)**

7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me:

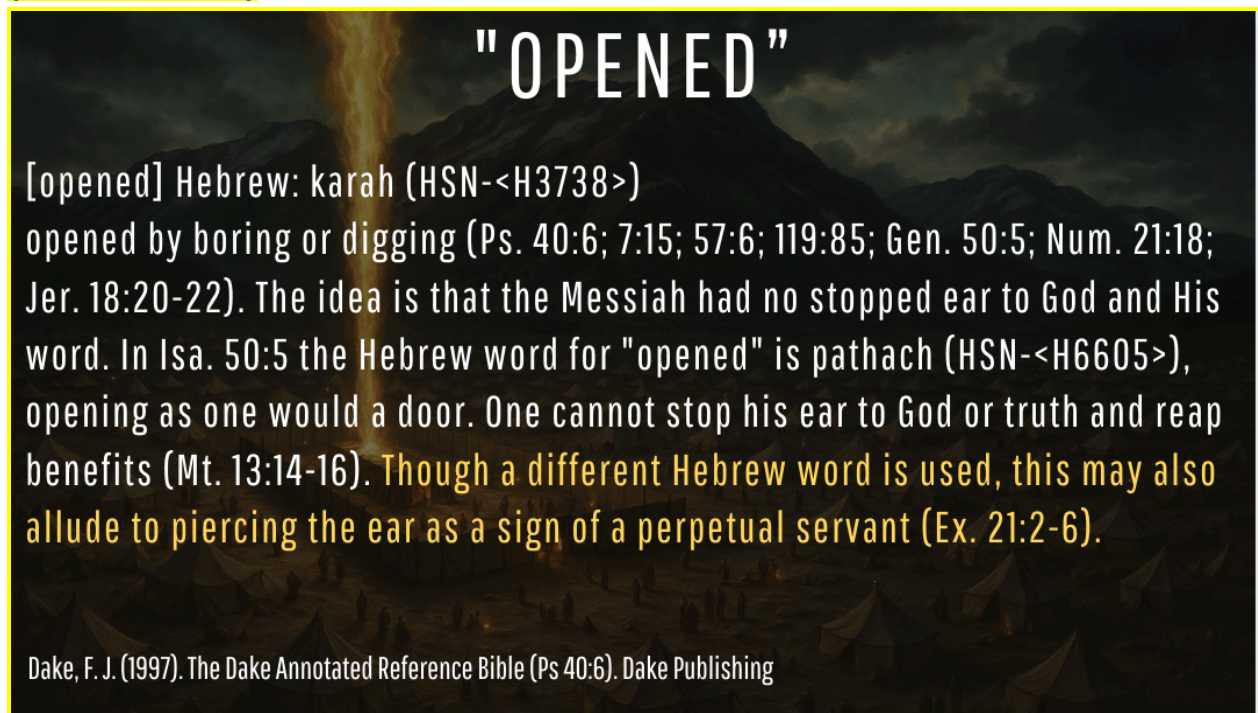
8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

The Hebrew man in this Psalm views himself like an indentured Hebrew slave that has been so benefitted during his time in the Master's house that all he wants to do is the Will of the Master. It is now within his heart to do so!

~

We clearly see the scenario of Exodus 21 in this Psalm and we also see the imagery of Christ who is the bondservant of God and has obtained a wife in His service. One of Pastor Eric's favorite commentators also made this connection in his reference work:

(READ SLIDE)



"OPENED"

[opened] Hebrew: karah (HSN-<H3738>)
opened by boring or digging (Ps. 40:6; 7:15; 57:6; 119:85; Gen. 50:5; Num. 21:18; Jer. 18:20-22). The idea is that the Messiah had no stopped ear to God and His word. In Isa. 50:5 the Hebrew word for "opened" is pathach (HSN-<H6605>), opening as one would a door. One cannot stop his ear to God or truth and reap benefits (Mt. 13:14-16). **Though a different Hebrew word is used, this may also allude to piercing the ear as a sign of a perpetual servant (Ex. 21:2-6).**

Dake, F. J. (1997). The Dake Annotated Reference Bible (Ps 40:6). Dake Publishing

~

Again, it is not important to get into differences in the Hebrew word selection that various translations have to interpret. This phenomenon occurs in all languages when prose is being adapted to musical verses, our point is that the conceptual link is very strong. This link becomes even more strident when you consider the way that Isaiah speaks about Israel and Messiah as a "ebed" or slave:

- **Isaiah 42:1 (NIVUK84)**

1 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42 refers to Israel/Messiah as the slave of God that is upheld and chosen by him to bring justice to the nations.

~

- **Isaiah 52:13 (NIVUK84)**

13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

Isaiah 52 refers to Israel/Messiah as the slave of God that will be lifted up and highly exalted.

- **Isaiah 53:11 (NIVUK84)**

11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53 refers to Israel/Messiah as the righteous slave that brings justification to many because he bore their iniquities. In all of these cases, Messiah is the slave of God that now lives to carry out his will. In our minds, this is conceptually linked to the Hebrew slave of Exodus 21 that loves his master and is willing to be pierced to remain in his house. No doubt, some have missed this connection because there are manuscript differences involved in the translation of Psalm 40 where alternates say "a body you have prepared for me" however, we think this commentator nailed the connection:

~

(READ SLIDE)

“PIERCED/ BORED = BODY PREPARED”

mine ears hast thou opened—lit., ‘thou hast digged.’ The sense is, thou hast made me willingly obedient; as in the passage of Jeremiah just quoted, and in Isa. 1:5, where also, as here, Messiah is the speaker—“The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious.” As the way in which he testified his obedience was by the assumption of a human body, the LXX. version, which Heb. 10:5–10 gives inspired sanction to, translate, ‘a body thou hast prepared me’—lit., ‘fitted for me’ [κατηρτίσω μου]. See my note there. The apostle brings out the deep sense latent in the psalm. The ear is the member of the body which symbolizes obedience. Hence **the boring of a bond-servant’s ear** was the token whereby he signified his desire still to remain his master’s servant, when he might be free (Exod. 21:6; Deut. 15:17). So the Divine Word testified His desire to become the Father’s servant by voluntarily assuming a human body, in order to offer the one only expiatory sacrifice which the Father desired, and of which all other ‘sacrifices’ were but shadowy types, having in themselves nothing acceptable to God. God opened Messiah’s internal ear—i. e., framed Him as the sinless man, willing to offer such a wonderful proof of obedience.

A. R. Fausset, A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Job–Isaiah, vol. III (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 188.

~

Whether us, Dake, or Fausset makes the point, we trust that you are able to see the link between Psalm 40 and the Hebrew bondservant committed to his Master for life. It is also worth noting that there are additional parallels with Exodus 21 to prophecies concerning Messiah. For instance:

- **Exodus 21:32 (NIVUK84)**

32 If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.

The price for restitution of the life of a slave that is taken through negligent manslaughter is 30 pieces of silver and Zechariah prophesied that this would be the wages, price, or payment of the rejected Shepherd of Israel. Perhaps even more to the point:

~

- **Philippians 2:5–11 (LSB)**

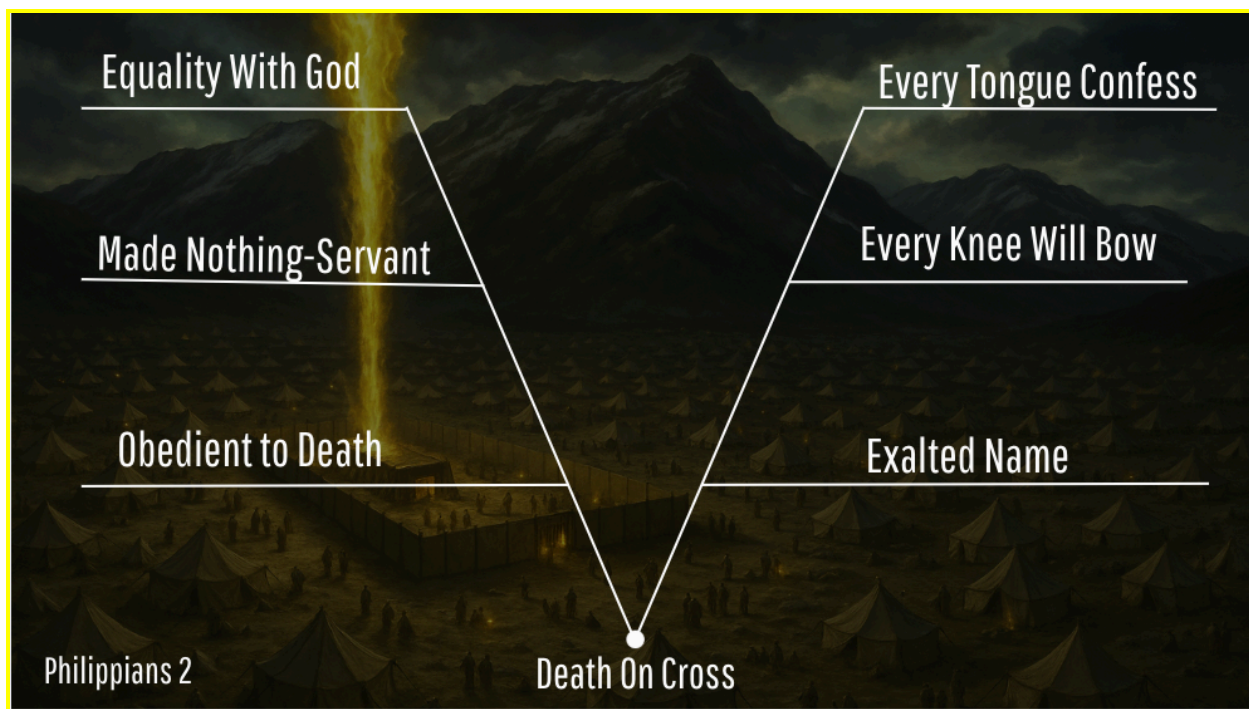
5 Have this way of thinking in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
7 but emptied Himself, by taking the **form of a slave**, by being made in the likeness of men.
8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
9 Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and that EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians he present Jesus a slave (Perhaps one that loved his master and wanted to obtain a wife as in Exodus 21) and said that we should think of ourselves the exact same way. Moreover, he demonstrated it in the form of a chiastic structure to make the point of what initially looked like slavery was actually the exaltation of the Messiah:

~

(READ SLIDE)



Our point is that a key principle of loving the Master that you came to as indebted and recognizing that he took you into his household and that your life has been advanced in every way since that moment is everything. This ought to make you want to be pierced for your master's will and desire that your body be prepared for His service in every way. You are the Exodus 21 bondservant. Let's examine a few things that must be considered along the lines of viewing yourself like the slave referenced in Exodus 21:

~

- **Acts 2:18 (LSB)**

18 EVEN ON MY MALE **SLAVES** AND FEMALE **SLAVES**, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR OUT MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

The books of Joel and Acts both declare that it is upon slaves of God that the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon!

- **Acts 4:29–31 (LSB)**

29 “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your **slaves** may speak Your word with all confidence,

30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders happen through the name of Your holy **Servant** Jesus.”

31 And when they had prayed earnestly, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with confidence.

When slaves of God who were in love with The Slave of God prayed the very earth shook beneath their feet.

~

- **Romans 1:1 (LSB)**

1 Paul, **a slave** of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, having been set apart for the gospel of God,

The very first thing Paul wanted to be known as when presenting himself to a church that had never met him was that he is a slave of Christ. Does this diminish him in your mind or elevate him?

- **2 Corinthians 4:5 (LSB)**

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your **slaves** for the sake of Jesus.

When writing to the Corinthian Church Paul says that he and his companions are acting as slaves of the Corinthians for the sake of Christ.

~

- **Philippians 1:1 (LSB)**

1 Paul and Timothy, **slaves** of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

Paul and his son Timothy presented themselves as slaves of Christ Jesus... Are you catching a theme here?

- **Jude 1 (LSB)**

1 Jude, a **slave** of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:

The very own brother of Jesus Christ refers to himself as the brother of James but the slave of Jesus.

~

- **Revelation 22:6 (LSB)**

6 And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His **slaves** the things which must soon take place.

The Angel that represents the message of Jesus Christ was sent to reveal to the slaves of Jesus the things that must soon take place. Biblical slavery is far different from "chattel slavery" that divests you of humanity, in fact, Biblical slavery is the restoration of what humanity was always intended to be, namely servants that loved their Master and were included as sons within the family. This kind of slavery is not diminishment it is elevation beyond the carnal populace and places you in the will of God. Say it with me Church, "I love my Master and I do not want to go free!"

~

7 "If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as menservants do. 8 If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has broken faith with her. 9 If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. 10 If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. 11 If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

Remember the context of these verses deal with Hebrew slaves. In the case of Hebrew slaves, whether male or female, they are always released after 6 years unless a female becomes married and is considered a spouse. These verses should be considered deeply because the people hearing them are the bride of Adonai who has just purchased her from

Egypt. The verses clearly show that when a servant is acquired in this way and becomes intimate with the Master, she may not be given over to a foreigner, or forsaken for another woman. Moreover, if the husband deprived her of food, clothing, or marital rights God considered it an instance of broken faith.

~

This was not only an extraordinary advancement in women's rights, it should be profoundly encouraging to you as a bond-servant bride brought into the household of God alongside Israel. These are profoundly deep revelations and they are also sincerely practical societal structures. This group of former slaves (just 50 days ago) did not enjoy these protections within Egypt. However, under this Divine instruction a female that was an indentured servant and became intimate with the master enjoyed the same protections as a wife. Additionally, if she was selected solely to become intimate with the master's son, then she is afforded the same rights as a daughter born in the house. Even if another marriage takes place, her rights can not be taken away.

An insightful student, might even see Jewish and Gentile shadows and types in these verses. Israel was purchased as a slave in Egypt and will be given to a son. Even if Adonai did obtain a 2nd slave as a wife for his son, this could never jeopardize the status of Israel. Our own view is that there are not two brides in the shadow and type but that we come to share with Israel in the inheritance of the saints... but it is noteworthy that any way you look at the scenario Israel will never lose her status in Adonai's eyes. To the original audience hearing these commands, they would have felt treasured by Adonai as a groom who would never break faith with them or forfeit his promise of providing nourishment (food), protection (clothing), and intimacy (marital rights) to them.

~

Back on the practical note, the Law even foresaw a man who would break faith with a woman in this way and a careful examination reveals that it was a shame to him and a steep penalty had to be paid for his actions. This is determined by the phrase in verse 8 that says "If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed",

and a Derash on similar verses will show us this. So the scenario would be that a man acquired an indentured servant and then became intimate with her but did not intend to treat her as a wife but instead tried to send her away... she must be redeemed and he is guilty of breaking faith. Consider these similar Laws on the subject:

- **Exodus 22:16–17 (ESV)**

16 “If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

~

The concept being addressed here is that the man has seduced and slept with a virgin and the Father does not consent to giving her as a wife. This is slightly different than a female Hebrew indentured servant but the principle is the same. The virtue of the Hebrew female is to be protected and a price of redemption must be paid because the master has broken faith with her. So what might be considered a price of redemption?

- **Deuteronomy 22:28–29 (ESV)**

28 “If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her. He may not divorce her all his days.

~

Deuteronomy addresses a situation that is akin to rape. This again is different from the scenario where the master of a female indentured servant has become intimate with the master and he breaks faith with her, but it gives you an idea of what a price of redemption may entail. He is to pay 50 shekels which is 20 shekels more than the price for the life of a slave killed in negligent manslaughter AND he is never to divorce her. Our point in going through this, is that the Law imbues females with rights that don't appear in most societies for several millennia. Adonai clearly intended

female slaves to be treated as wives or daughters and the price for violating that principle seems to be set higher than the value of a life!

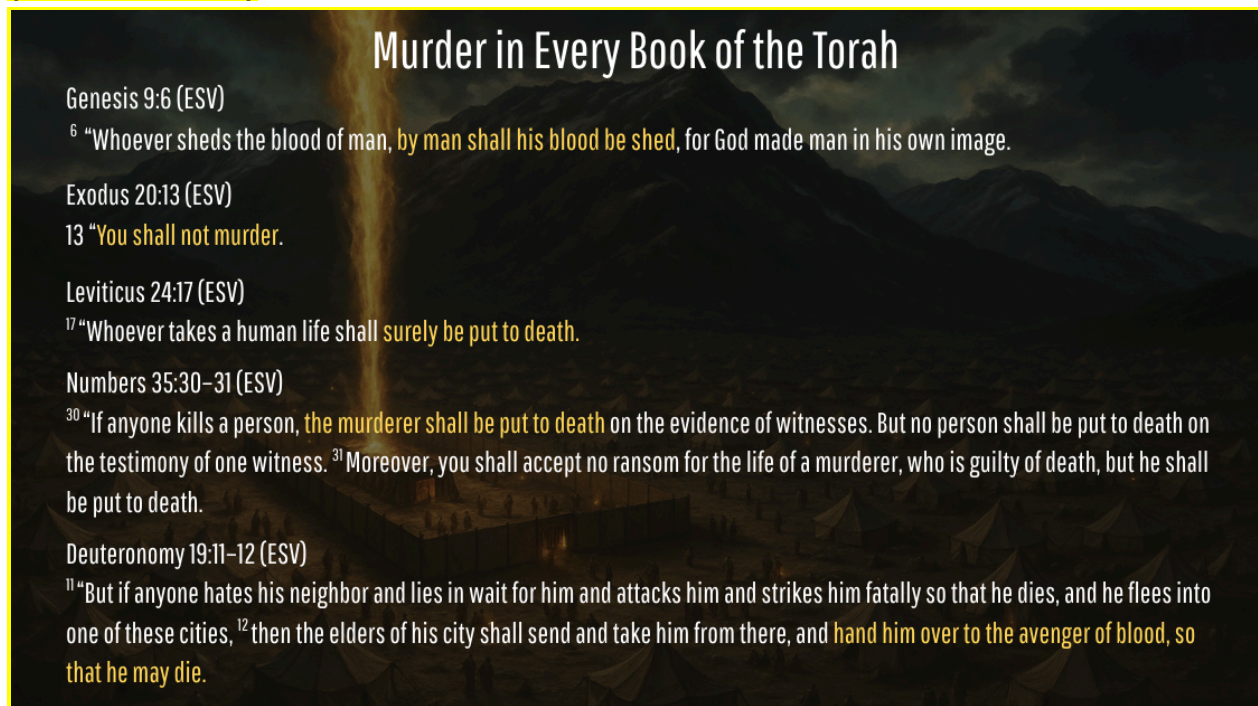
We still have 24 more verses to go and this session has been worth the price of admission, given that it was free... let's move forward to issues of restitution that begin in verse 12:

~

12 “Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death.

This is a reiteration of the 6th command and the frequency that this command is repeated illuminates the Torah's aim to preserve and foster life. In fact, there is no book of the Torah that does not contain this Divine statement. Consider this slide:

(READ SLIDE)



Murder in Every Book of the Torah

Genesis 9:6 (ESV)
⁶ “Whoever sheds the blood of man, **by man shall his blood be shed**, for God made man in his own image.

Exodus 20:13 (ESV)
¹³ “**You shall not murder.**

Leviticus 24:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ “Whoever takes a human life shall **surely be put to death.**

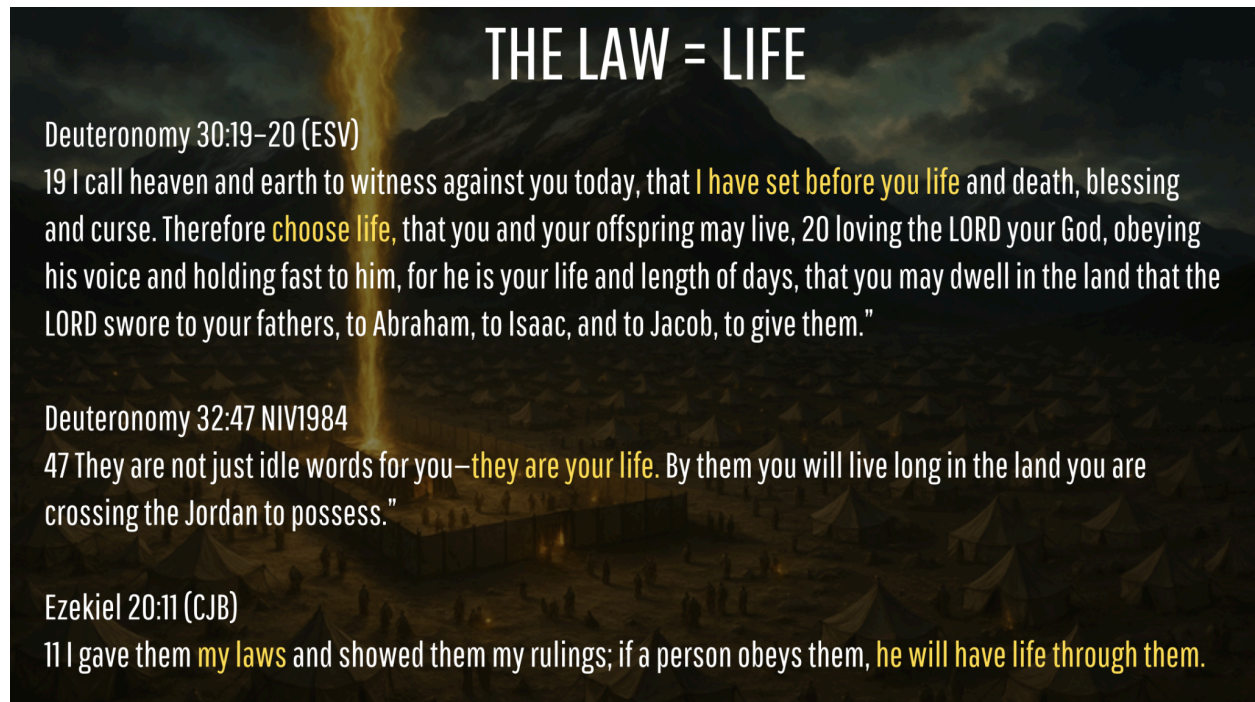
Numbers 35:30–31 (ESV)
³⁰ “If anyone kills a person, **the murderer shall be put to death** on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ³¹ Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death.

Deuteronomy 19:11–12 (ESV)
¹¹ “But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, ¹² then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and **hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die.**

~

In the introduction we showed you two slides titled "The LAW=LIFE" this is not just a cute catch phrase, it is actually the primary function of the Torah. Let's show you those slides again and point to the highlights:

(Name the book and read only the yellow highlights)



THE LAW = LIFE

Deuteronomy 30:19–20 (ESV)
19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **I have set before you life** and death, blessing and curse. Therefore **choose life**, that you and your offspring may live, 20 loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Deuteronomy 32:47 NIV1984
47 They are not just idle words for you—**they are your life**. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Ezekiel 20:11 (CJB)
11 I gave them **my laws** and showed them my rulings; if a person obeys them, **he will have life through them**.

THE LAW = LIFE, pt 2

Proverbs 12:28 NIV1984

28 In the way of righteousness **there is life**; along that path is immortality.

Proverbs 19:16 NIV1984

He who obeys instructions (Mitzvot) **guards his life**, but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die.

Mark 3:3-5 NIV1984

3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." 4 Then Jesus asked them, "**Which is lawful** on the Sabbath: **to do good** or to do evil, **to save life** or to kill?" But they remained silent. 5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.

Romans 7:10-11 NIV1984

10 I found that **the very commandment that was intended to bring life** actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

20:13

20:13

What may be even more astounding is that Exodus 21 aims to protect all life, even when an unintentional death has occurred. As we read the next verses that will come into focus.

~

13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate. 14 But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.

These verses deal with the difference between premeditated murder and an accidental fatality. Death was the first enemy to enter the human race and Adonai structured His society in a way that limited the proliferation of death. From the moment that sin entered the world through disobedience the human heart has been murderous. This is evident from the original sin in Genesis 3 and the immediate introduction of murder in Genesis 4. The murder of Abel by Cain didn't just break the 6th commandment, it's origin

was in the violation of the 10th commandment. Cain was covetous of Abel's acceptance and then sought to murder him.

- **1 John 3:12 (ESV)**

12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

~

In Genesis, Abel's bloods (plural) cry out from the ground signifying the generations lost due to murder and emphasizing the broader impact of homicide. Exodus 21 is Divine instruction that prevents the generational loss of life by both prohibiting premeditated murder and limiting revenge killings that would quickly spiral into blood feuds. When an accidental fatality occurred this Law makes provision for the preservation of life so that there would not be an ever-escalating series of killings.

Many people overlook the fact that our legal systems differentiate between various forms of loss of life. This distinction, rooted in Exodus 21, has shaped the Western world's understanding of murder. In most Western societies, murder is defined as the intentional and unlawful killing of another person with malice aforethought—a term derived directly from the Biblical narrative. Murder is typically categorized into three degrees of punishment: first-degree murder, which is premeditated and deliberate; second-degree murder, which is intentional but not premeditated and often occurs in the heat of the moment; and felony murder, which is a death that occurs during the commission of a dangerous felony, even if unintended.

~

While this list is not exhaustive, Exodus 21 does not equivocate with these distinctions. Intentional murder is punishable by death with the testimony of two or more witnesses, emphasizing the preservation of life. The distinction made in Exodus is not between degrees of murder but rather between murder and accidental death that could be mistaken for murder. Today's court system is characterized by laws rather than justice, overwhelmed by shades of gray that delay punishment and fail to deter crime. The brilliance of Exodus 21 lies in its ability to hold a murderer accountable with swift

execution while differentiating between murder and accidental death. God's system is superior to ours, deterring murder and promoting mercy for unintentional and accidental deaths.

Christians who fail to grasp the concept of capital punishment misunderstand both the heart of God and the responsibility of humanity. Covetousness often leads to murder, which can spiral into a never-ending cycle of killings, commonly known as blood feuds. Exodus 21 addresses this issue by removing the murderer from society and providing protection for those involved in accidental deaths. In such cases, the individual could flee to a designated place, safeguarding them from vengeful relatives seeking unjust retribution. Without this provision, an innocent person might be presumed guilty of murder, leading to a cycle of retaliatory killings that would perpetuate endlessly.

~

We were very tempted to give you a Law, Prophets, & Writing string here to illustrate what leads to murder and how much it has affected the world but our time is not going to permit that. Instead, let us summarize the situation and cite our references for your review. **Deuteronomy 19** outlines the escalation that occurs from hatred to **lying in wait**, to murder and declares that this must be purged from society. In **1 Kings 21**, the narrative illustrates the covetousness of Ahab regarding Naboth's vineyard and Ahab's orchestration of Naboth's death so that he could seize his vineyard. In **2 Chronicles 24**, Jehoiada preserved and protected the life of Joash only to have Joash conspire to kill the son of Jehoiada who was a righteous prophet named Zechariah. The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings are replete with these events and they all culminate in the unlawful killing of the Son of God because of covetousness. Jesus comments on these things prior to the cross and said:

~

- **Luke 11:42–54 (ESV)**

42 “But woe to you Pharisees! **For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God.** These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and

greetings in the marketplaces. 44 Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.” 45 One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.” 46 And he said, “**Woe to you lawyers also!** For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. 48 So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 **from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah**, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. 52 Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.” 53 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, 54 **lying in wait for him**, to catch him in something he might say.

~

The purpose of reading this lengthy excerpt from Luke is to demonstrate that the minute` distinctions made by lawyers who claim to uphold the Law actually miss its entire point, which is the preservation of Life. From the first murder in the Tanakh, that of Abel, to the last, that of Zechariah, these events occurred because people ignored the most significant elements of the Law: loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself. This culminated in the most religious people on the planet, who were obsessed with meticulously accounting for the smallest details of the Law like collecting a tenth of herb, **lying in wait** to unlawfully kill the Messiah.

~

Time is short so, let's shift our focus from the topic of murder and return to the discussion about individuals involved in accidental deaths. Adonai, in His wisdom, did not want these individuals to fall victim to vengeful relatives seeking retribution. To protect them, He promised to establish a designated place where they could find sanctuary, provided they adhered to certain conditions. The progression in the development of the designated place to what became known as cities of refuge reveals the heart of God and the greater purpose of the Law. Exodus begins with a reference to only 1 designated place but in Deuteronomy this is expanded and multiplied because of the Torah's aim to promote life. Let's look at that progression from Exodus through Deuteronomy.

- **Exodus 21:12-13 (1984 NIV)**

12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to **a place I will designate**.

~

The concept of the City of Refuge first appears in the Word as a singular place. However, God's intention was never for it to remain a single location. The idea was to start with one and eventually expand to multiple cities, creating a network of refuges.

- **Deut 19:1-3 (1984 NIV)**

19 When the Lord your God **has destroyed the nations** whose land he is giving you, and when you have driven them out and settled in their towns and houses, 2 then set aside for yourselves three cities centrally located in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess. 3 **Build roads** to them and divide into three parts the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, so that anyone who kills a man may flee there.

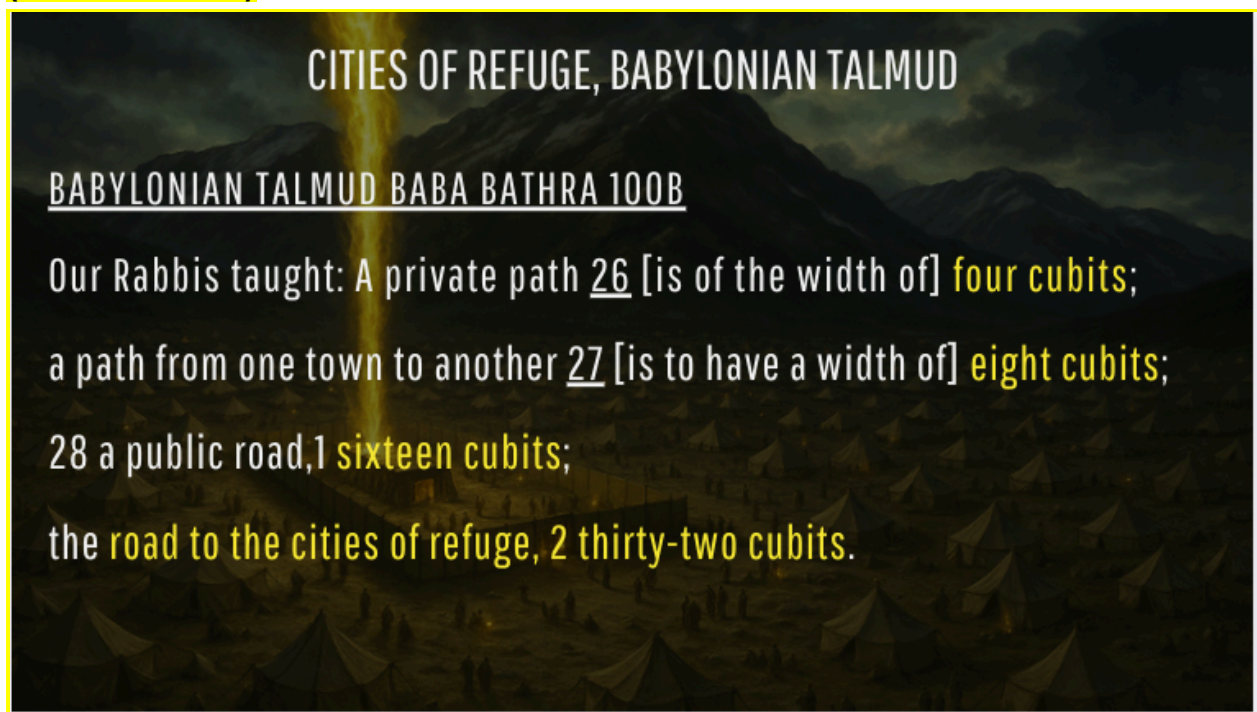
Once the enemies are driven out of the land, the single place of refuge expands into three centrally located cities. These cities were intended to be well-connected by significant roads, ensuring easy access by anyone

involved in an accidental fatality because Adonai wanted to protect all human life.

~

We started with a single city chosen by God. After overcoming the internal adversaries, we expanded to three cities. Now, we have reached three more cities, symbolizing the ever-growing nature of God's intention to protect and nurture life. The Babylonian Talmud contains details that emphasize this understanding:

(READ SLIDE)



~

The Torah's emphasis on preserving life is evident in its teachings. The nation that received the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy understood this principle so deeply that they designed their highway system to ensure access to cities of refuge, thereby preventing the shedding of innocent blood. The Mishnah also comments on this aspect of the Torah in the section that pertains to Laws Regarding Murder and the Preservation of Life chapter 8:5, it says:

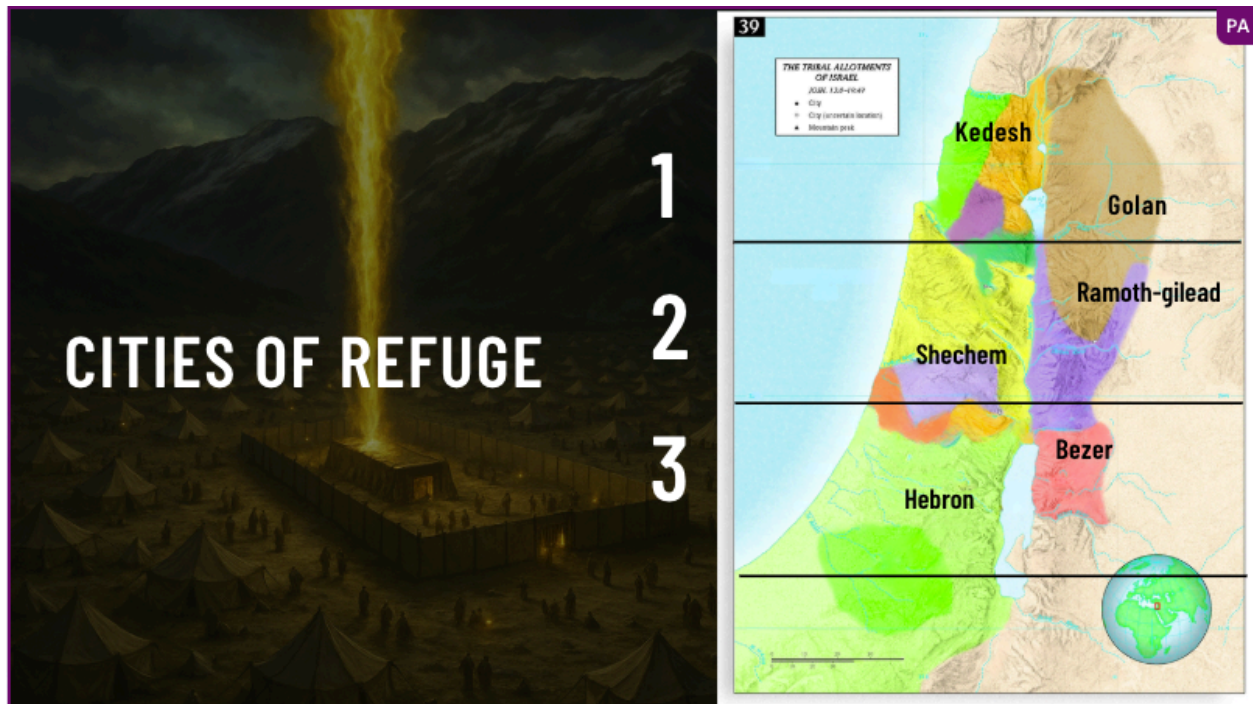
(READ SLIDE)

Cities of Refuge, Mishnah

The Jewish court is obligated to construct roads leading to the cities of refuge; they should be maintained and widened. Any stumbling block and obstacle should be removed from them. On these roads neither a hill, a valley, nor a river should be left. Instead, a bridge should be built across so as not to impede a person fleeing there. This is all implied by Deuteronomy 19:3, which states: "You shall prepare the road for yourselves." The width of the road to the city of refuge should not be less than 32 cubits. Signs stating "Refuge, refuge," should be written at intersections, so that killers would be aware of the way and turn there.

Mishnah Torah, Murder And The Preservation of Life, 8:5 - Retrieved From sefaria.org

This cultural emphasis on making sure that a person involved in an accidental fatality had clear and direct access to cities of refuge reflects Adonai's concern for the lives of His people and the emphasis was a direct result of the Torah. In fact, when you look at the locations of the cities themselves, it becomes evident that every quadrant of Israel was designed to provide easy access to a city of refuge.



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As you can see the cities of refuge were dispersed from North to South and on either side of the Jordan river to ensure equal access to the cities by every portion of the population.

We don't have time to go into detailed exegesis on the passage, but it is noteworthy that the Rabbis tended to view Isaiah 57 in the light of the cities of refuge:

- **Isaiah 57:14–15 (NIVUK84)**

14 And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road!
Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.”

15 For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives for ever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

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The key point is that a person would feel broken and remorseful after being involved in an accidental fatality, and Adonai wanted to preserve their life.

When examining the other stipulations in the Torah regarding designated cities of refuge, it becomes clear that the individual had to remain in the city for the duration of their life or the High Priest's life. This is particularly significant when considering that each of us has been involved in situations that unintentionally caused spiritual death, yet we found refuge in Christ, who has both died and been raised to glorification, ensuring that he never dies. This means that he is our eternal freedom and protection from the avenger.

- **Hebrews 7:16 (ESV)**

16 [Jesus] who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

Praise be to God for the Refuge that is Messiah... let's keep moving in our text.

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15 “Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death.

The fifth commandment, spoken audibly by God from heaven, instructs us to honor our father and mother. Verse 15 expands on this principle, emphasizing the importance of respecting parental authority. Last week, we discussed how many people exhibit a profound lack of respect for their parents, often stemming from a general disdain for authority. Parents are typically the first authority figures in our lives, and this attitude often mirrors our feelings towards God, equating a dislike for parental authority with a broader rejection of divine authority. This divine revelation about attacking one's parents adheres to the same principle: attacking your parents is akin to attacking the primary authority that God has placed in your life. In essence, an attack on your parents is an attack on God.

~

16 “Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells him or still has him when he is caught must be put to death.

The parallel passage in Deuteronomy captures the heart of this Divine revelation very well.

- **Deuteronomy 24:7 (NIVUK84)**

7 If a man is caught kidnapping one of his brother Israelites and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from among you.

The purpose of these Divine edicts is to promote life by eliminating blatantly evil practices from the nation that Adonai delivered from Egypt. The scenario of kidnapping and selling individuals as slaves has already occurred in Israel's history (think Joseph). Although Adonai's merciful intervention led to their deliverance, it was not an endorsement of tolerating such practices. Adonai did not want His people to engage in this behavior, as it would hinder their ability to reflect His character. Revisiting the wisdom of executing kidnappers and slave traders is essential in our time, as human trafficking remains a scourge on humanity to this very day.

~

17 “Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

This statement seems pretty straight forward but the Hebrew reveals a deeper connection than most people would have discerned in the English translation. Let's step back in time to Genesis 12 and examine the links between Abram and this topic of cursing your father or mother. This slide is from our studies in Genesis 12:

(READ SLIDE)

Genesis 12:2-3 (NET)

Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great,
so that you will exemplify divine blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you,
but the one who treats you lightly I must curse so that all the families of the earth may receive
blessing through you."

The phrase that is in the box on the screen "the one who treats you lightly I must curse" is God speaking about Abram. Abram was intended to be a father to many nations. This means that if Abram was treated lightly then Adonai would take adverse action against the one who did it. This is because Adonai was making Abraham a father to many nations and Abraham was intended to be a blessing to every family on earth. Allowing Abraham to be treated lightly, cursed, or disregarded as insignificant would prevent the families of the earth from being blessed. Consider the wording used on the next slide.

(READ SLIDE)

Genesis 12:2-3

If they do this to Abraham:

Curse (H7043) - קָלַל (qalal):

Meaning: To curse, to treat with contempt, to despise.

Connotation: making light of, treating with contempt, or showing disrespect. It can imply a less severe form of cursing, such as belittling or dishonoring someone.

God will do to them:

Curse (H779) - אָרַר (a'ar):

Meaning: To curse, to bitterly curse.

Connotation: invoking harm, misfortune, or a curse upon someone in a strong and emphatic manner. It implies a pronounced and active curse.

*Strong's Concordance, Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

The point here is that Abraham could not be treated lightly or Adonai would bitterly curse the one who did it to protect the plan of salvation that affects the whole world. Where this gets even more interesting is that there is disproportion in the interchange of Hebrew words. If Abraham is (qalal) or treated lightly then the perpetrator will be (a'ar) bitterly cursed.

~

Now consider that the Hebrew phrasing of Exodus 21:17 is “Anyone who curses (qalal) *or treats lightly* his father or mother must be put to death. Adonai is so concerned with the families of the earth that He takes extreme measures to protect the plan of blessing and redemption. Likewise, Adonai is so concerned with the family unit within Israel that he prescribes death for the person who treats his father or mother as an insignificant thing.

This parallel between the treatment of Abraham who is the father of many nations and an average father within Israel, serves to highlight the importance of Adonai's nation that is intended to be a kingdom of priests. Adonai is the ultimate King and his bride must reflect His feelings on authority and the means by which He is bringing salvation to the world.

Anyone who would curse their own father or mother is rebelling against God and His method of blessing and redemption for the world.

~

18 “If men quarrel and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die but is confined to bed, 19 the one who struck the blow will not be held responsible if the other gets up and walks around outside with his staff; however, he must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and see that he is completely healed.

To many people reading these Laws is a similar experience to reading the U.S. tax code and that is unfortunate because they reveal the wisdom and greatness of Adonai who dwells closely with His people. Most of you think of the United States as a very modern and progressive country. Do you realize that the U.S. did not have laws about the restoration of lost wages in the event of an injury until the Federal Employees' Compensation Act of 1916? Even then, it only pertained to federal employees. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that the U.S. legal system caught up to what Adonai gave 3,600 years ago!

~

We are only pointing this out because the Torah promotes life. This section of Exodus 21 guarantees lost wages to an injured party as well as places responsibility on the offender to see that the injured party is properly healed. Do we need to tell you that this was not typical in the ancient world? Remember the context for these statements is that the people are only about 50 days into their liberation from Egypt. If you were in the original audience, wouldn't you view these laws as Divine revelation given as wisdom from heaven?

20 “If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, 21 but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property.

One of the reasons we explained the difference between "chattel slavery" and Biblical slavery is because it is so difficult for modern audiences to

contextualize verses like these. In our time an employee can tell his boss to "go make love to himself" and we generally just laugh it off. However, that is not a Biblical view of authority. The slaves in view in this section of Exodus are fellow Hebrews who have offered themselves like indentured servants to a master. That master is responsible for their protection, provision, and general welfare in exchange for their labor for a specified period of time. The slave offered himself into this scenario voluntarily and in exchange for the benefits of the situation including a bonus at the end of his tenure.

~

Since the introduction we have been making the case that these relatives who volunteered themselves into slavery were viewed as family members. Remember we did this by quoting Malachi and Galatians where sons and slaves are held in parallel view. Now let's consider two other examples from Genesis that have bearing on the right of a master to discipline his slave within limits just as he would his own son within limits.

(READ SLIDE)

"PUT YOUR HAND UNDER MY THIGH"

When, therefore, Eleazer and Joseph give the oath, in that they place their hands upon the thigh of the one swearing them, the act had a special meaning. The thigh is the symbol of posterity; in **Israel the symbol of the promised posterity**, with the included idea of the promise, Gen. 46:26; Ex. 1:5. **Eleazer and Joseph thus must swear by the posterity, the promise and the hope of Abraham and Israel.** This promise should be changed into a curse for them if they did not regard the oath... **It is sufficient to regard the thigh as the symbol of the whole posterity, the generative organ as symbolical of the immediately succeeding generation**

Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Lewis, T., & Gosman, A. (2008). A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis (p. 483). Logos Bible Software.

RASHBAM

Put your hand **under my thigh**. Compare Jacob saying to Joseph, "**Place your hand under my thigh as a pledge of your steadfast loyalty**" (47:29). This is how a son swore to his father and a servant to his master, since the servant's status is comparable to that of a son: "A son should honor his father, and a slave his master" (Mal. 1:6).

Carasik, M., ed. (2018). Genesis: Introduction and Commentary (M. Carasik, Trans.; p. 205). The Jewish Publication Society.

~

Please don't miss the intricacy of this parallel. All Hebrew slaves were relatives and their status was comparable to a son's status. Any father

would appropriately discipline his son within limits. The Law is affording the same status to the indentured servant that has come into the master's house. The Law is enumerating the limits that a master has on disciplining an indentured servant within his estate that has acted in a manner the master disapproves of. This is a life giving warning to all those with authority over others because Adonai clearly cares how you treat those under your authority. The ESV captures the translation of these verses with exceptional clarity:

- **Exodus 21:20 (ESV)**

20 "When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged.

~

Completely different from "chattel slavery" a Hebrew slave had rights that protected his physical welfare, his economic status, and his marital union. If a slave was beaten and died, Adonai says "he shall be avenged". Clearly, Adonai cares for all life in every circumstance and two truths emerge from this Law. Firstly, the man in authority has the right to discipline those under his authority within certain limits. Secondly, the man in authority is held responsible for abuses of his authority. The Newer Testament does not amend this reality. On the contrary, Ephesians 6, Colossians 3, Titus 2, and 1 Timothy 6 all compel Christian slaves to obey their earthly masters and the texts also often reminds earthly masters that there is an authority over them as well.

22 "If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. 23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

~

Again, it is remarkable that Adonai directed his nation with this kind of clarity regarding an unborn child and our own nation holds such barbaric and murderous practices such as abortion. In ancient Israel a life within the

womb had equal value as a life outside of the womb. This means that 3,600 years ago there was more clarity on this subject for a nation that had only been liberated from slavery 50 days earlier than there is in the highest courts in our land today.

It is probably important that we address misunderstandings that arise from Jesus' comments on the principle of an "eye for an eye".

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- **Matthew 5:38–42 (NIVUK84)**

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ 39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Remember that Matthew also records Jesus saying:

- **Matthew 5:17 (NIV)**

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.

There is no need to reconcile these two passages because they are not at odds with one another. The contradiction is not in the verses themselves but in our understanding of their application. Exodus 21 is dealing with equitable application of the Law in a judicial system and ensuring proportional and not excessive penalty to damages. Matthew 5 is speaking about a person to person interaction rather than a judicial system.

~

Consider that without the Law in Exodus you would have no basis for even saying a wrong had been done, that you could have decided to personally forgive. In a judicial setting the state has a responsibility to the society at large and to God to ensure that malevolent behavior is purged from the

community. On a personal level, we are willing to be wronged or disadvantaged rather than be entangled in escalating retaliatory measures. Jesus was addressing personal dispositions not the judicial system of the entire nation. In summary, the judicial system was to be proportional as the state adjudicates a verdict. On the other hand, it should be your personal inclination to be willing to be wronged, forgive, and not be vindictive. Perhaps on another night we will give a more thorough treatment to that subject but the Law aims at loving God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself. This may mean that the state must purge evil or penalize evil behavior to keep neighbors from harming each other and an individual can choose to forgive without pursuing restitution because of his love and trust in Adonai.

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26 “If a man hits a manservant or maidservant in the eye and destroys it, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of a manservant or maidservant, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the tooth.

The Divine rules certainly served as a deterrent against mistreatment of those under one's authority. Losing six years of labor due to a moment of anger would stringently discourage such behavior. Absolute obedience was expected from underage sons and slaves, but if a father injured his son's eye, most societies would remove the son from his care. Similarly, the Law demands the liberation of a slave from an abusive master. Interestingly, most Rabbis seem to believe these rules apply to gentile slaves just as much as they do foreign slaves, but there is no explicit passage confirming this. In our view, Exodus 21 specifically addresses Hebrew-to-Hebrew and Bride-to-Bride relationships, but it is comforting that the cultural consensus of Israel seems to have applied the same standards regarding protection of health to both Jewish and Gentile slaves.

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Lastly, if it seems odd to you that the specific example of a tooth is mentioned, perhaps it is because it is the smallest irreplaceable part of the body that dramatically affects daily life. The idea is a Kal Vey Chomer... if this applies to a tooth, how much more to another part of the body.

28 “If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. 29 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 must be stoned and the owner also must be put to death. 30 However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded. 31 This law also applies if the bull gores a son or a daughter. 32 If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.

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We probably don't need to tell you how unbiblical it is to value animal life over and above human life. The modern concept that humans can die as long as we save or preserve a Galapagos Penguin is pretty far from the heart of God. These Divine Laws illustrate our personal responsibility for the behavior of anything under our authority. Many cultures would have considered the actions of a goring bull to be an "act of the gods" but in the Torah the owner of the bull is responsible for its behavior. Moreover, in addition to the bull being put to death for taking a human life (which is Genesis 9). The man is held further responsible if he knew of the bulls propensity to this destructive behavior in advance of the event.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that the sages suggest that the meat is not to be eaten because we should not benefit from negligence that harms human life.

33 “If a man uncovers a pit or digs one and fails to cover it and an ox or a donkey falls into it, 34 the owner of the pit must pay for the loss; he must pay its owner, and the dead animal will be his.

35 “If a man’s bull injures the bull of another and it dies, they are to sell the live one and divide both the money and the dead animal equally. 36 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 the dead animal will be his.

~

As we begin to close, we want to make a few comments regarding these last few verses because they contain instructions regarding negligent behavior and the subsequent restitutions that had to be made. In the case of verses 33, 34, and 35, both situations are dealing with the loss of an animal as a result of another man's negligence. These verses are not dealing with the loss of human life but rather they are given so that in the instance of negligence that results in the loss of another's property, both parties in the conflict would be taken care of appropriately and there would be peace between them.

Make no mistake, these verses are not dealing with malice aforethought nor are they dealing with the loss of human life... These commands demonstrate the level of care and wisdom that Adonai used in setting guidelines for his people in regards to their interactions with each other in the most minute` details... Notice that in these passages, the offender in question is negligent in his responsibility to ensure that his work or his animal does not cause injury to those around him... In the case that he fails to do this, he is responsible to pay for the damage that his negligence has caused to his brother Israelites' property. This command is beautiful because God even cared about the property that belonged to his people, but notice that there is something even more beautiful going on here. In the event that the negligent man fails to cover a pit or knows that his bull had a habit of goring and pays the owner for the animal that dies, who does the dead animal belong to? It belongs to the negligent man!

~

This is beautiful because it shows the level of care that Adonai as a groom has for his people even in their negligence... He did not want the negligent man, who now has to pay a large price for the damages he has caused, to be unable to continue to live because of the monetary penalty for his negligence. In both cases of the pit or the bull that had a habit of goring, the negligent man is still able to receive the dead animal that he could use for food, clothing, and other things that would benefit his household from processing the animal.

As we prepares to close, we want to re-read part of Deuteronomy 4.

- **Deuteronomy 4:7–8 (ESV)**

7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? 8 And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

We often hear presentations highlighting the medical facts revealed in the Bible long before society discovered them. Similarly, the Bible contains astronomical details that were known well in advance of society's understanding. Many believers may not fully appreciate the advanced societal and legal precedents found in the Law of God. We are in awe of the Divine revelation in the Torah and proclaim, "What great nation is there that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law?" Our prayer is that you spend your lifetime engrossed in the study of the Law, for it is your life.