

The Covenant – Part 1 (3 Sivan [May/June] 1446 BC)

Exodus 20:22–22:20

Proper Worship of Yahweh

20:22 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven.

23 You shall not make *other gods* besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves.

24 You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.

25 If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.

26 And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it.’ [cf. [Gen 3:21](#); [1 Tim 2:9–10](#)]

Treatment of Israelite Slaves

21:1 “Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them:

2 If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

3 If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.

4 If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone.

5 But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’

6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

7 “If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do.

8 If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her.

9 If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters.

10 If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

11 If he will not do these three *things* for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without *payment of money*.

Capital Crimes—Murder, Kidnapping and Violence against Parents

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

13 But if he did not lie in wait *for him*, but God let *him* fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.

14 If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him *even* from My altar, that he may die.

15 “He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

16 “He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.

17 “He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. [[Matt 15:4](#); [Mark 7:10](#)]

Personal Injury by Humans

18 “If men have a quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with *his* fist, and he does not die but remains in bed,

19 if he gets up and walks around outside on his staff, then he who struck him shall go unpunished; he shall only pay for his loss of time, and shall take care of him until he is completely healed.

20 “If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished.

21 If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken; for he is his property.

22 “If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges *decide*.

23 But if there is *any further* injury, then you shall appoint *as a penalty* life for life,

24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [[Matt 5:38–42](#)]

25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

26 “If a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave, and destroys it, he shall let him go free on account of his eye.

27 And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth.

Personal Injury by Animals

28 “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished.

29 If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.

30 If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him.

31 Whether it gores a son or a daughter, it shall be done to him according to the same rule.

32 If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his *or her* master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Damage or Destruction of Personal Property

33 “If a man opens a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it over, and an ox or a donkey falls into it,

34 the owner of the pit shall make restitution; he shall give money to its owner, and the dead *animal* shall become his.

35 “If one man’s ox hurts another’s so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide its price equally; and also they shall divide the dead *ox*.

36 Or *if* it is known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not confined it, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead *animal* shall become his.

Theft, Accidental Property Damage & Restitution

22:1 “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

2 If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account.

3 *But* if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

4 If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.

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

6 “If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or the standing grain or the field *itself* is consumed, he who started the fire shall surely make restitution.

7 “If a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep *for him* and it is stolen from the man’s house, if the thief is caught, he shall pay double.

8 If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, *to* determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor’s property.

9 For every breach of trust, *whether it is* for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, *or* for any lost thing about which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before the judges; he whom the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.

10 “If a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep *for him*, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away while no one is looking,

11 an oath before the LORD shall be made by the two of them that he has not laid hands on his neighbor’s property; and its owner shall accept *it*, and he shall not make restitution.

12 But if it is actually stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its owner.

13 If it is all torn to pieces, let him bring it as evidence; he shall not make restitution for what has been torn to pieces.

14 “If a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies while its owner is not with it, he shall make full restitution.

15 If its owner is with it, he shall not make restitution; if it is hired, it came for its hire.

16 “If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her *to be* his wife.

17 If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.

Capital Crimes—Sorcery, Bestiality and Apostasy

18 “You shall not allow a sorceress to live.

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

20 “He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed.

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