

How Do We Govern Ourselves? Part 2

Exodus Chapter 22

What is important to God as He sets up Civil Laws?

Chapters 21, 22 and 23 are social legislation that will govern Israel.

Exd 22:1 **1) Concerning Personal Property and Restitution** v. 1 - 15 God Understands Loss

"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.

- A man steals property and disposes of it by slaughtering it or selling it. The penalty is the emphasis here. God already commanded that "You Shall Not Steal". (8th commandment Exodus 20:15)
- The penalty is not simply return equal value. The penalty is to return 5 times for an ox and 4 x for sheep. The deterrent for this crime is that it costs more than the value of that which was taken.

Exd 22:2 "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account.

- If a thief breaks in at night and a homeowner strikes him and he dies there is no penalty towards the homeowner.
- This in some places "Make My Day" laws

- But if the Sun us up....

Exd 22:3 "{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.

- With the sun up the homeowner can see clearer and will be held accountable for killing the thief.
- Seeing clearer he can see the threat is only theft. And when caught the thief is to pay 5 x for an ox and 4 x for a sheep.
- If the thief does not have the means to pay he shall be sold into slavery to make payment.

Exd 22:4 "If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall **pay double**.

Exd 22:5 "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.

- While your neighbor is away your dog goes next door and digs up the vegetable garden.
- The restitution is "FROM THE BEST" of his field. Not an extra one or

Exd 22:6 "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**.

Exd 22:7 "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**.

Exd 22:8 "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.

- If money or goods are given to a neighbor for safe keeping and yet it is stolen.
 - The thief when caught pays restitution.
 - The neighbor (if no thief is caught) needs to appear before judges to determine if the neighbor is responsible.

(God gives us money, possessions, children, ministries -- Are we being good stewarts?)

Exd 22:9 "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.

Exd 22:10 "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,

- Exd 22:11 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**.
- Exd 22:12 "But if it is actually stolen from him, he shall make **restitution** to its owner.
- If an animal is entrusted to a neighbor and yet while he had responsibility the animal dies naturally or becomes sick or a storm drives the animal off the neighbor is not responsible.
 - Before the judges if the neighbor gives an oath (*This statement is true so help me God or If this is not true let me be anathema*) all should take him at his word.
 - But if the animal is stolen the neighbor is responsible.
 - It seems that if the neighbor could have fought for the property rights of the neighbor this puts the neighbor in a place of responsibility.
- Exd 22:13 "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.
- Exd 22:14 "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**.
- The difference with this verse from verse 10 + 11. The neighbor here borrows the item rather than given an item for safe keeping.
 - The borrower has more responsibility than the neighbor who was asked to watch over. The Borrower borrowed more than just the property. He also took the responsibility of accidental loss.
- Exd 22:15 "If its owner is with it, he shall not make **restitution**; if it is hired, it came for its hire.
- If the owner is there the neighbor is not the responsible one.
- Exd 22:16 **2) Concerning Virginity** v. 16 God Values Purity
- "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.
- Exd 22:17 "If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.
- The Bible clearly denies the existence of "casual sex"
 - 1 Corinthians 6:16 "do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body {with her?} For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."
 - In this case a virgin is seduced. A dowry must be paid. A dowry was a sum of money that was given as a promise to care for a man's daughter. The dowry the moneys that the father had if for some reason the husband didn't keep or care for his wife. The dowry afforded the father to care for a daughter who was not a virgin no more. (more difficult to find another husband)
 - It didn't matter if the father refused to let her marry the man. The man took her purity and the value of that purity was paid for.
 - One has to wonder if this was upheld in our culture would the incidence of pre-marital sex decline?
 - What is the value a young girl or young man put on their virginity.
 - Is it an embarrassment to be a virgin or is your virginity a gift worth hundreds, thousands or even millions?
- Exd 22:18 **3) Concerning Order** v. 17 - 20 God expects His Design to Govern
- "You shall not allow a sorceress to live.
- Exd 22:19 "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.
- Exd 22:20 "He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed.
- These three are so severe that they are capital offenses. Deserving of Death
 - A Witch - 1 Samuel 15:25 equates witchcraft to rebellion "For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft"
 - This is more profane than your dog lying on the bed with you. (bestiality was a relatively common practice in Egypt)
 - Sacrifice to **ANY** other Gods is deserving of death.

Exd 22:21 **4) Concerning Assistance to the Needy** v. 21 - 27

God Sides With Those Who
are Suffering Human Affliction

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exd 22:22 "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.

Exd 22:23 "If you afflict him at all, {and} if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry;

Exd 22:24 and My anger will be kindled, and **I will kill you** with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

- Throughout the scriptures we see God will fight of the poor, the fatherless, the widow. Any who oppress these are an enemy of God.
 - Psalm 9:9 "The LORD also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble;"
 - Luke 4:18 Jesus read of himself, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED"
 - James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"
- The orphan and widow are the weakest in society. God protects them.
- The importance of this is also found in the change of who the oppressor is. IT'S YOU!
- If YOU do this I will kill YOU! You who I love. I'll Kill You!

Exd 22:25 "If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.

- If you lend money to the brethren, the poor who need to borrow money, you will not charge interest.

Exd 22:26 "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets,

Exd 22:27 for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear {him,} for I am gracious.

- God cares so much for the poor that if the poor loans his coat out, he who borrows it must return it before the sun sets. This coat is his covering, his bed.

Exd 22:28 **5) Concerning Holiness** v. 28 - 31

God Is Holy and Expects Us to be Holy

"You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

- The tongue shall be holy. We Christians do not curse or revile.
- Christians do not curse God or the rulers over us.

Exd 22:29 "You shall not delay {the offering from} your harvest and your vintage. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me.

Exd 22:30 "You shall do the same with your oxen {and} with your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

- God wants a quick response for what is right. If God asks of an offering or your obedience, God expects there not be a delay.

Exd 22:31 "You shall be holy men to Me, therefore you shall not eat {any} flesh torn to pieces in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

- God made man in His image. Man is separate from a beast and should act accordingly.

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