

16. The law from the Lord

9/24/2006

Each year, thanks to our town, city, state and federal law makers, we have thousands of new laws become active at the end of their sessions. Among the laws they produce, there are some down right dumb laws or old laws that no longer necessary but still in effect.

Here are few examples:

Hunting camels in AZ is prohibited.

The US Army once experimented with camels in the Arizona desert many decades ago, and they eventually gave up. The remaining camels were set free, and are now protected. This law is still in effect.

So if you see camels during your hunting trip, by all means, please do not shoot.

Our neighbor State California a.k.a. the Land of Nuts and Fruitcakes have these laws:

It is a misdemeanor to shoot at any kind of game from a moving vehicle, unless the target is a whale.

Women may not drive in a house coat.

No vehicle without a driver may exceed 60 miles per hour.

But God's law is complete and perfect. Yes, some of them are not fitting exactly due to the differences in custom and social settings. But the spirit of the law can be applied in our lives without any problem.

We are going to highlight a few portions of chapter 21 and 22 of the Book of Exodus which cover the law concerning servants, violence, animal control, property and morality. I believe that we are going to learn very valuable yet practical lessons from this old, but perfect law of God.

A. THE LAW CONCERNING SERVANTS

Exodus 21:1-6 "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: 2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Though the Jews were permitted to own slaves from other nations, usually prisoners of war, they were not allowed to enslave their own Israel people.

God reminded them the Israelites that they once were slaves of the Egyptians, too. So they must treat their own slaves well.

There were four basic ways a Hebrew might become a slave to another Hebrew:

- In extreme poverty, they might sell their liberty.
- A father might sell his children into servitude.
- In the case of bankruptcy, a man might become servant to his creditors.
- If a thief had nothing with which to pay proper restitution.

The Hebrew servant worked for six years and then was set free. At the end of the six years, went out with what he came in with.

But if, after the six years of servitude, a servant wished to make a life-long commitment to his master – in light of the master’s goodness and his blessings for the servant – he could, through this ceremony, become a bond servant to his master. This commitment was not motivated by debt or obligation, only by love for the master.

In the ceremony, the servant’s ear would be pierced – opened – with a sharp object, in the presence of witnesses – then, he shall serve him forever.

This is a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to this earth and took upon Himself our humanity. And we were all slaves of sin. He could have returned to heaven, to His position in the Godhead, without going through the doorway of death. He did not have to die upon the cross. But He willingly came down to earth and took upon Himself our humanity.

Philippians 2:7-8 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

This prophecy regarding Jesus becoming a bondservant of the Father God was mentioned in Psalm 40:

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

Apostle Paul, Peter, James and Jude introduced themselves as bondservants of Jesus Christ in their letters in the New Testaments.

We should consider it is our extreme privilege to be bondservants of Christ.

B. THE LAW CONCERNING VIOLENCE

Exodus 21:12 “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. 14 “But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

This verse is the basis for capital punishment. These laws are the logical application of the sixth commandment, “You shall not kill”. We’re made in God’s image, so to murder a fellow human being is to attack the image of God. If a person was found guilty of murder on the testimony of two or more witnesses, then the murderer was killed.

The Law made a distinction between premeditated murder and accidental manslaughter. Once Israel was in their land, they set apart six cities of refuge where the manslayer could flee and be protected until the matter had been investigated. But for the ones who premeditated, God didn't extend His mercy. God would say to Moses, "Book'em, Mo. Murder One!"

Justice is the practical outworking of the righteousness of God in human history, because the Lord loves righteousness and justice.

C. THE LAW CONCERNING THE RIGHT PUNISHMENT

Exodus 21:26-27 If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

It is our tendency to do more to the offending party than what they have done to us. This principle can apply to our modern practice of assessing huge punitive damages in lawsuits, and this law presents the principle that only the loss itself is to be compensated. This law made sure that the punishment sentenced by the judges was equal to the seriousness and severity of the crime, not more and not less.

But Jesus teaches us not to pay back evil for evil. God is our Defense for personal insult.

Romans 12:17-18 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

However, the Bible is not against personal defense.

Do you remember what the Pope commented about the Islam religion? Recently he said some of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as "evil and inhuman," particularly "his command to spread by the sword the faith." So, the entire Muslim communities around the world are threatening to burn down Catholic churches. I guess they are not people of a violent religion at all. Hmmmmm!

D. THE LAW CONCERNING ANIMAL CONTROL

Exodus 21:28-32 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. 29 But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Interestingly, the price of a gored slave was thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah said prophetically, concerning Jesus Christ:

Zechariah 11:12-13 Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.

And in the New Testament we read that Judas Iscariot went to the priests and he conspired to betray Jesus. For what? Thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. He sold his Savior and God for thirty pieces of silver.

Some of you are not born-again Christians. For whatever the reason, so far you have been rejecting the Savior and Lord Jesus Christ who is God. I hope and pray that you are not selling your eternal soul that Christ wants to save for whatever the things you are holding onto now. Think about eternity, not just now. This earthly life will flee away soon. Then what? I will give you a chance to come to have eternal life in Christ.

E. THE LAW CONCERNING MORALITY

Exodus 22:18-24 "You shall not permit a sorceress to live. 19 "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. 20 "He who sacrifices to any god, except to the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21 "You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

The practice of sorcery was almost always associated with "medicinal arts" in the ancient world, and was therefore a connection between drug taking and occultist practices.

Nowadays it would be using horoscope, Ouija board, getting into Dungeon and Dragon game, voodoo, black magic, witchcraft, Wicca, palm reading, fortune telling, channeling, transcendental meditation and satan worship.

Mom and dad, observe what your children are getting into. Don't get into any horoscope garbage yourself either. Do you want to know what is ahead of you? Get into the Word of God. It will speak the truth all the time without asking for money.

Bestiality is prohibited by God's Word, because it is a damnable perversion. The gift of sex is designated for husband and wife by God, no one else, nothing else.

Exodus 22:25-31 "If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious. 28 "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. 29 "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30 Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. 31 "And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

The rich must not exploit the poor but give them the help they need. God hears the cries of the afflicted.

Proverbs 28:8 One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion Gathers it for him who will pity the poor.

Blaspheming God was a capital offense. It is a good thing that God is so merciful. Those who use God's name in vain are going to wish that they use His name in vain one less time while they will be in hell.

God has established human government, and even if we don't respect the officer, we must respect the office.

We are called to be holy men and women of God, not following what carnal people of this dying world would do.

V31 tells us that we cannot use a road kill for our next barbeque.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) When we serve our God, we must do it because we love Him, not because it is our duty.

2) Our God's law is perfect and helpful for our spiritual and physical aspects.

Psalm 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

Psalm 119:1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord!

3) We should consider it is our extreme privilege to be bondservants of Christ.