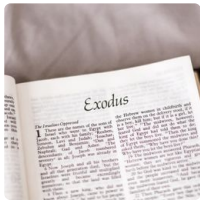


# OpenTheo

## Exodus 21:12 - 22:31



### Exodus - Steve Gregg

Exodus 21:12 - 22:31 outlines laws related to society, including property rights and the value of livestock and land. In this society, violent crimes were punished with death while property crimes received restitution. The passage also touches on issues concerning self-defense, the treatment of the poor, and the proper preparation of meat. The speaker notes ongoing discussion and complexity surrounding these ethical and legal issues, highlighting the importance of neighborly love and the leading of the Spirit in navigating them.

### Transcript

Okay, let's pick up Exodus chapter 21 at verse 12 now. He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. But 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.

Now this is developed in several passages later in the Pentateuch where God assigned certain cities of refuge, which were especially cities that were set aside for an accidental murderer, an involuntary manslaughterer, to flee so that he would not succumb to the avenger of blood. In that society, it was not the government that killed murderers, it was the family of the victim. Usually the next brother, the next of kin to the victim, was the avenger of blood.

So if you killed my brother, it would be my obligation to kill you. And so the avenger of blood often is not reasonable because you could say, but it was an accident. Later on in the law, an example is given if you're swinging an axe and the axe head flies off the handle and hits a guy in the head and kills him.

That's an example of an accidental bloodshed. Now you could say to the avenger of blood, hey, I didn't mean to kill your brother, it was an accident. But sometimes the avenger of blood might not be reasonable and they might not accept your excuse and so forth.

And so a person who had accidentally killed somebody, the way it puts it is that God had delivered him into his hand, which simply means that the guy died because God, it was

God's choice of time for that guy to go and not yours. You didn't choose to kill him. You could flee then to a city of refuge and there would be a court there that would hear your case.

And if they found you innocent, you could live, but you had to live in the city of refuge. You couldn't go outside. Only in the city of refuge were you safe from the avenger of blood.

If you went outside, the avenger of blood might get you. So you had to live there until you died or until the high priest died. Once the high priest of that that was sitting at that time would die, you would also be free to leave.

And then it would be wrong for anyone to kill you after that. Interesting laws we'll talk more about later on. But the point here is that premeditated murder must be put to death.

But an accidental murder is not to be so treated. But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor to kill him with guile, you shall take him from my altar that he may die. Take him from my altar assumes that the murderer may actually do what Joab did when Joab was seeking clemency for his murders that he'd committed.

He went to the altar at the temple and he laid his hands on. He held on the horns of the altar, which was apparently a symbolic gesture of pleading for mercy. And but God says if he is a premeditated murder, don't show any mercy, even if he's clinging to the altar.

He's got no he's got no right to be there. He's a murderer. He should be put to death.

He who kidnaps a man and sells him or if he's found his hand, she'll surely be put to death. Now, kidnapping then was punishable by death. That's why I said that Atlantic slavery would never be tolerated in the Bible because the slaves have been kidnapped.

Now, it's interesting that the man would be put to death even if his captive was found alive or if he if he had or if he'd sold him, he's still put to death. So I guess a person might otherwise think, well, I'll kidnap this person. And if I can't find anyone to buy him, I'll just release him back to his home.

But, well, no, kidnapping is the is the punishable offense and therefore you'd be put to death in any case. He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death if men contend with each other and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die, but is confined to his bed. If he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted.

He shall only pay for the loss of his time and shall provide for him as thoroughly to be thoroughly healed. Now, if the case where men are fighting and a severe injury is inflicted by one man on the other, the one who inflicts the injury must pay all the man's

expenses until he's ambulatory, until he's able to get up and walk around. Assuming he eventually does have the power to get up and walk around.

Once he's able to get up and walk around even with this walking stick or a cane, then the man who injured him is free of his obligations. But if the man can't get up and walk around, then apparently the man who injured him has to pay his expenses for life or however long it is before that man can get up and walk on his own. Because it says in the end of verse 19, he shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed.

Now, verse 20, if a man beats his servant or his slave or his maidservant with a rod so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Now, this was different than in other countries, because a slave was mere property. You could beat him to death if you wanted to.

You can kill him like you could kill your animal. Not in Israel. Slaves had human rights, too, but not as many.

By becoming a slave, they had forfeited some of their human rights, but not their right to life. And it says, notwithstanding, if he remains alive for a day or two, then the man shall not be punished, for he is his property. What this means is that if you beat your servant, which would probably not be that uncommon if you have a rebellious servant, you had to make him obey.

So you could beat your servant to make him obey, just like you could spank your children to make them obey. Servants, remember, were grown men in most cases. And if he just said, I'm not going to obey you, what can you do? Well, he's got to be subject to some punishment.

Beating was that punishment. But if a master beat his servant to death, that was not OK. If he beat his servant to death, the master would be punished for that, put to death presumably.

But if he didn't beat him to death, but the man was injured in ways that the master did not perceive and died of internal injuries or of injuries two or three days later. Then the master would not be put to death, although he was responsible for his slave's death. It's clear he didn't intend to beat him to death.

If he intended to be in death, he would have beat him to death on the spot. The fact that he beat him only severely enough that the man could go home and linger for a few days alive means that the master had not intended to kill him. And therefore, the slave's death, if he died after two or three days, would be one of those accidental manslaughter things.

It would be not a deliberate murder. And it says, for he is his property. What it means is that that either means he had the right to beat him because he's property or it might

even mean he obviously didn't intend to kill him because it's his property.

Why would a man seek to destroy his own property? The death was accidental. Verse 22, if men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no lasting harm follows, he shall surely be punished according as the woman's husband imposes on him and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any lasting harm follows, then you should give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

And if a man strikes the eye of his servant or the eye of his maidservant and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocked out his servant's tooth or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let them go for the sake of his tooth. So a servant could go free if they sustained a serious injury from their master like that, a permanent injury.

And so that would be to motivate a master not to do not to inflict any permanent injuries on their servants because then they would lose their servant and not receive any work or pay for them. Now, the woman with a child, this passage in verse 22 is one of the main ones that is used to discuss the issue of abortion and the status of an unborn child. And it's always a little bit unclear how this is to be understood.

I think I think my as I understand it leans a certain way. If men fight and hurt a woman with a child, she's the one who's hurt, not the child, so that she gives birth prematurely. That is not an abortion, not even necessarily a miscarriage, but she gives birth.

It's a it's a premature birth. It does not say that the baby dies necessarily, but it says if she gives birth prematurely, yet no lasting harm follows, he shall surely be punished according to the woman's husband. What he imposes on him as the judge is determined now.

No lasting harm falls into the woman or the baby. One way of seeing this is that the baby maybe is so premature that the baby dies, but the woman suffers no permanent harm from it. And therefore, it's considered that the the husband has to be repaid for the loss of the child.

But the other view is that no lasting damage comes to the baby, not the mother. So that the idea of the you know, the baby's rights are are here preserved. If some lasting harm comes to the baby, then there is a payment made to the husband about it.

It's not clear on whether the lasting harm is intended to be to the baby or the woman, but it could be both. Obviously, a woman could be injured in such a way that she gives premature birth, but neither she nor the baby suffer long term harm. And the long term harm presumably would be the harm to the mother or the baby.

In which case, presumably, again, even if the baby dies, you would think this was an

accidental death since the two men were fighting and not intending to hurt the woman. But it says if there's lasting harm, presumably to the woman or the man or the baby, that there's going to be commensurate payment. If the woman loses an eye or the baby does, presumably, then the man who created the injury loses an eye.

Likewise, a tooth or hand or foot or anything. If the woman is made to fall into a fire or something, she gets a burn or she gets wounded by falling down or whatever. The same penalty is to be imposed on the man who caused the harm.

And that that goes right up to the point of even a life for a life. In another passage, this one doesn't mention that. And maybe life for life is not mentioned here because it is accidental.

And the man who caused the injury was not intending to kill anyone. So maybe life for life doesn't extend to this one. Although this same list of eye for eye, tooth for tooth and so forth is found in multiple places in the tentative Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

And in the other list, it does mention life for life. But this is a particular instance where it's not about an accidental harm done because two men are fighting. And the woman is a bystander who accidentally gets bumped and injured.

So even if she does die, it was an accident. And so presumably, the guy doesn't get killed. Now, if verse 28, if an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox will surely be stoned and its flesh will not be eaten.

But the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. OK, so no one eats the ox's meat because that would make there be no penalty. That is, if an ox kills somebody, the ox has to die.

But so what? The ox was probably going to die and be fed to humans anyway. But this ox doesn't get to be fed to humans. This ox doesn't have the privilege of becoming human, which animals do when they get eaten by humans.

Their cells become human cells. Their protein becomes human protein. So this ox doesn't have the pleasure of becoming human.

It just has to die as an ox and suffer the consequences for having killed a human. Remember that back in Genesis chapter nine, when God first established the law about capital punishment, he specified that this was to be enforced both against humans and animals that would kill, that would shed human blood. In chapter nine of Genesis, verse five, it says, Surely for your life blood, I will demand a reckoning from the hand of every beast.

I will require it and from the hand of man. So God's requiring the blood of a human victim of the murderer, even if the murderer is an animal. Now, the animal doesn't have moral responsibility.

But just to show that the human life has value, the animal certainly cannot be allowed to live. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in the past and it has been made known to its owner and he has not kept it confined so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox should be stoned and its owner also should be put to death. Now, the owner, therefore, is responsible for his criminal negligence, something he owns that he knew was dangerous.

He has not taken precautions to preserve his neighbor's life and his ox has killed someone. So the owner is put to death, too. He is responsible for his property and for his negligence.

It's like if you, I don't know, if you parked your car somewhere and you didn't put the parking brake on and you left the car and it rolled down the hill and ran over a child. You'd be culpable. It's your car.

You're responsible for it. You're supposed to make sure it's parked safely. You know it's something that can hurt people and you can't be careless with it.

And this man has an ox that has been known to thrust with the horns before, and therefore he's got to keep it locked up. If he doesn't, he's responsible for whatever damage it does. Notice in both of these cases, the ox is stoned.

That's not usually how you would butcher an ox. It's stoned to death because that is seen as a judicial punishment. It is being executed.

It's not being butchered for food. Verse 30. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him.

That is, if you had an ox that was dangerous and you had not kept it in and it gored your neighbor's son and killed him, you should be put to death. However, your neighbor could allow you to redeem your life by paying some kind of penalty, some fee probably. And then you'd redeem yourself.

You wouldn't have to be put to death. And probably because although you were responsible, you have not deliberately killed anyone. You are responsible for not keeping your ox locked up.

But you never you didn't have any malice toward the person who died. You weren't intending to kill them. So it is sort of an involuntary manslaughter, but one for which you're very responsible.

Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment, it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a manservant or a maidservant, he should give to the master 30 shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned. So although a manservant, a maidservant is worth less than a free person in that society, the ox still is stoned

because it's a human being.

The servants are human beings and they are treated like human beings. And if a man opens a pit or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make it good. And he should give money to the owner.

But the dead beast shall be his. OK, so I have an open pit in my property. Your animal walks up and falls in it.

Well, your animals on my property. I can't just I can't just deprive you. I have to pay you for it, but I can eat it.

It's my meat. It's on my property, but I pay for it. I don't I don't.

Otherwise, I might be digging pits hoping to catch your animals so I can get free meat. But no, the meat is not free, but it's a just settlement. The animal is worth something.

You pay for it, but you get to eat the meat. OK, verse thirty five. And if one man's ox hurts another so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it and the dead ox.

They shall also divide. So it's an ox for an ox. One ox is sold for money.

The other is is eaten, but they each share in the same amount of benefit and penalty for it. Verse thirty six. Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox and the dead beast shall be his own.

So those are some things that we don't really relate to very much because we don't most of us are not keepers of livestock. But that was what most people were. Most people had livestock.

If they had any wealth at all, it was in the form of livestock or land, farmland. And so the illustrations will be taken from that agrarian society. But we can see the principles and how justice is is served in these cases.

And we could apply them to modern situations in terms of things other than livestock. Chapter twenty two. If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

If the thief is found breaking in. Oh, let's wait on that one. Let's look at the sheep and the oxen.

Now we will find further on down. In verse four, that if if a thief steals an animal and he is caught up with. While the animal is still alive, he has to restore the animal and double it.

But if he cannot restore the original animal, if he's already slaughtered it or sold or something, then he has to restore more than double with an ox. It's five oxen with a sheep. It's four sheep.

Because stealing an ox is a larger theft, a bigger crime. The penalty is proportionally more. But notice that in the law of Moses, which was God's laws, they didn't have prison.

One thing they couldn't very well have prison wandering through the wilderness. And therefore, instead of a prison system, they had a system where violent crimes and crimes that were very, very serious were punished with death. Then you didn't need a prison.

The criminal is dead and property crimes were punished with restitution. Now, this is a more just criminal justice system than we have in this country. Because, for example, if you get burglarized and the burglar takes all kinds of valuable things and you never get them back, well, he's going to go to jail.

But you're not going to get your stuff back. That's not justice. You see, a criminal is considered in our society as if he's a his crime is a crime against the state.

And therefore, the state takes its pound of flesh by putting them in prison or executing or doing whatever. But in the Bible, it's a crime against human beings. It's a crime against victims.

And the penalty is they have to make it right to the victim. You know, if you have your stereo stolen from your car and the police catch the guy, your stereo is probably going to get impounded, you know, for as evidence for when the guy goes to court. And by the time the guy goes to jail, you know, you may never get your radio back.

Now, radio is not as expensive thing as some other things, but it's not written into our laws that thieves have to pay back their victims. It's rather if they get convicted, they do time or they do something like that. And there's no justice to the victims here.

But the law of Moses is different. It was the victims who were victimized and it was they that were paid back. If you steal from me, you're going to pay back me.

And you're going to give me double. If you return the original item, you have to return the original item you sold, plus another one like it. If you can't return it because you already sold it or got rid of it or destroyed it, then you have to return either four or five more depending on its value.

So this would be basically a strong incentive not to steal because you're going to have to come up with a lot of restitution if you get caught. Now, here's an interesting thing versus two and three. If a thief is found breaking in and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed.



If the sun is risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He shall make the full restitution. If he has nothing, then he should be sold as a slave for his death.

Now, I used to understand this little thing yet a certain way. And now I see it somewhat differently. I used that.

The contrast is there's a different situation. The sun has risen upon him. And so I assume that in the first instance, we're talking about a man breaking at night and getting himself killed by the homeowner as an intruder in the house.

And I thought for a long time what this was saying was if someone breaks into your house in the nighttime, since they didn't have electric lights and stuff in there, they had to just rope in the dark. You might in resisting a burglar, you know, resist them in such a way where you accidentally killed him in the dark and so forth. But that it was daytime.

You can't kill him because you expect to have more control over the situation. I see it differently. Now, the way I see it is that it's saying it now.

Now, of course, it is assumed that the man is breaking in at night. That would be normally the case that if while a man is breaking in to steal something, he gets himself killed by the homeowner to protect his property. The homeowner is not held responsible by breaking into the house.

The burglar has taken his life into his hands and has basically taken the risk that the homeowner will not let him get out alive. And so a burglar that is killed breaking in has no one to blame but himself. And therefore, the homeowner is not held guilty.

But it was as if the sun is risen on him. What I think that means is if, in fact, the burglar has come and gone, you know, and daylight has come and he's caught up with. Let's say the homeowner gets a posse together.

He catches up with the guy. The homeowner can't kill him then because he says instead the guy should just make restitution. Apparently, the idea is if he's in your home, the assumption is it's dark.

You don't know what he's there for. You don't know if he's there to rape your wife or kill you or whatever. You resist him however you do.

And if he gets himself killed, that's his tough luck. But if he simply steals something and leaves and you catch up with him the next day, you can't kill him retrogressively. You know, from, oh, well, if I caught you in my house, I would have killed you.

Now I'm going to kill you out here. No, it's too late for that. You see, apparently, if you kill the man in your house, the assumption is in the dark.

You do what you can to protect your family. You don't know what his intentions are. He's

in your home.

He's an intruder. You do what you can to protect your family and your stuff and he may get killed. But once he's not in your home anymore, once the sun has risen and he's long gone and you catch up with him, then you can't kill him.

You can only make him give back what he stole and give restitution also. That's what I think it's saying. Now, how would a Christian, you know, see this? There is obviously some ambiguity in the Christian ethic with reference to self-defense.

On the one hand, there are those who say we shouldn't defend ourselves or our property and we certainly shouldn't kill anyone to do so. And that is because, for one thing, the man who gets killed in the act of crime is not ready to meet God. And we are.

So we can die. We should be more willing to just let somebody kill us if they wish to then kill them back. Because that's what Christ did.

He let himself be killed rather than call twelve legions of angels to kill those who were killing him. And that's what Christlikeness is. That's what the martyrs did.

They didn't fight back. It says in James chapter five that the rich people have condemned and killed the righteous and the righteous do not resist him. In James five verse six.

And so some say that even if someone broke into your house, you should just not resist them and you should not certainly not kill them. Others say, well, you have an obligation, first of all, to protect your family and maybe even your life. Because there's times when protecting your life, you're not doing a selfish thing because you're not just your own.

You are your children's dad. You are your wife's husband. You are a provider to the family.

And therefore, it's for your children's sake and your wife's sake that you protect yourself. After all, an intruder might kill you only to get to them. And therefore, some say, well, the intruder is, you know, he's asking for trouble by coming in.

He's taken his he's taken the risk. You shouldn't feel badly if you kill an intruder in your house. I have.

I wrestle with those ethical questions a lot, because for one thing, I would agree that a criminal gets himself killed in in the course of committing the crime. You know, we can only say that justice is done. But the question of whether Christians are to be the executioners of justice is another thing, because as Christians, we are to love our enemies.

As Christians, we are to care more about their souls than about our possessions. Maybe even care more about their souls than we care about our lives. And that's more

Christlike, more like the apostles, more like the martyrs, more like Christians in the early days.

And so you have Christians who believe totally in nonresistance and Christians who believe in, you know, just following the ethics of justice, including resisting the evil man. Now, of course, the one passage in Jesus teaching that seems to come up most for consideration. Even it is not as clear in its application to every case as we could wish.

But Matthew chapter five is where Jesus said in verse 38 and following. You have heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you not to resist an evil person.

But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take you away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him to give to him who asks you and from him who wants to borrow from you.

Do not turn away. Now, what Jesus is saying is you have heard that you should resist or even retaliate against evil men. If they strike your eye, you take their eye.

They take your tooth out, you take their tooth out. That's what the ethic was and is of justice. But Jesus says in there are times when you can forgo justice, especially if justice means your opponent deserves to be hurt.

You as the victim do not have to hurt him back. And which is do not resist the evil man. Some people have taken this as a complete nonresistance ethic like the Mennonites have done in the Amish and the Quakers and others.

And and the early Christians actually did, too. But we have to admit that Jesus is not describing in any of these examples anyone who is threatening your life or someone else's life. First of all, all the examples he gives are when somebody is doing something to you.

Someone strikes you on your right cheek. Somebody makes you go one mile. Someone sues you.

Somebody asks you for something. In other words, in every case, Jesus does call upon us to give up our rights, our right to retaliate, our right to even defend ourselves in court. Perhaps.

But he doesn't actually raise the question of situations where other people are in danger. Maybe other people for whom you should be considered responsible, like your children or your wife, or for that matter, your neighbor. The Good Samaritan was a good example because he cared for his neighbor who was not his own family.

And of course, he didn't do violence to anyone to protect him, but he put himself at risk by stopping in those thief infested mountains and helping this man. And there's a good chance that if the thieves had come back for him, he would have put up some resistance. And Jesus probably would have still commended him for that because he's protecting this other victim.

But in the Old Testament, certainly it was a virtuous thing to come to the rescue of other people who are victims. And it would seem that that's still a virtue today. So the application of Jesus teaching about not resisting the evil man, the examples he gives are all somewhat narrowly confined to situations that are a nonlethal situations.

Someone slaps you on the cheek. It's not lethal. Someone sues you.

So makes you go a mile. That's not a deadly situation. And B, it's only situations, the only situations mentioned are where you are the one who has something to lose personally.

Your dignity or your cloak or your time. Although there is this teaching about not resisting evil man, it's entirely cast in the scenario of a non deadly situation where you're the only party that's under attack in a situation where it is deadly or where you have others to protect. Jesus does not give any specific instruction.

And therefore, we have to go in that kind of situation, as with all situations, by the principle of your neighbors, you love yourself. But this principle itself is ambiguous in a case where there's perhaps. You see a crime being committed against somebody else.

Which neighbor is this a love? You've got a perpetrator and you've got a victim and they're both your neighbor and you're supposed to love even your enemies. But what are you supposed to do in a situation like that? There are some who think that you should just trust God to resolve the situation because you're supposed to love both the victim. But as I understand it, intervention is the only loving thing to do.

Certainly is the loving thing to do for the victim. And it's not. It's arguably not unloving toward the perp.

The perpetrator needs to be stopped, too, for his own good, too. Now, deadly force is another matter. If you kill a perpetrator.

Obviously, you haven't done him a favor, but you've done his victim a favor. You have probably dispatched him to hell, which is something that Christians would not wish to do. And for that reason, I myself feel and everyone else has to make their own decisions about what it means to love your neighbor.

I myself feel like I probably could not use deadly force in resisting even someone breaking into my house. Now, someone says, well, what if they're about to kill your children or kill your wife? Well, if deadly force is the only way to stop them, I think I

probably would employ it. But I have a feeling that if I had the wherewithal to use deadly force, I could use that same force in a non-deadly way.

I would think. But those situations are hard. And what Christians often want is a list of rules.

In this situation to this, in this situation to that. That's why Jason didn't come to give us a list of rules. He didn't come to give us some laws.

He came to give us, well, his spirit. So it would be led by his spirit and the fruit of the spirit is love. He wants us to love our neighbor.

But the application of that principle would differ from situation to situation. And people really have to be led by the spirit. That's why I don't.

That's why I don't take a firm side about what all Christians must do with reference to military involvement. I myself have always been on the pacifist side because I personally don't think I as a Christian could kill my enemy. But there are Christians who feel like, well, you've got to save the innocent folks who are suffering at the hands of your enemy.

And so they consider that loving to fight. It's hard to know who's right about that. The early Christians were on my side.

But most Christians throughout history have been on their side. The early Christians for the first three centuries didn't believe Christians should fight in wars. They didn't think it was a Christian thing to do.

But from the time of Augustine anyway on, almost all Christians have believed there are some wars that they should fight in. So it's a hard call. And as a Bible teacher, I'd like to be able to say, but here's the right answer.

But there really is ambiguity there because it all boils down to what is the loving thing to do. And sometimes we may not know, in which case we just have to ask God to give us the wisdom to know what to do. And then we do what we do.

I would say this, though. If I was in a situation, and this is a very unlikely situation since I don't have the ability to use deadly force for the most part. But if I was in a situation watching a crime in progress where it was either I have to kill the perpetrator or he's going to kill a victim.

There's a life is going to be lost. And I'm the one whose intervention is going to decide intervention or non intervention, which life is lost. I would sooner, I think, intervene to kill the perpetrator.

Even if I later thought I wish I hadn't done that, at least the innocent victim would be alive. And no one could argue that the perpetrator didn't get what he deserved. Whereas

if I didn't intervene and later thought I did the wrong thing and the victim was dead and I was the one who's inaction caused that.

I'd rather live with it on my conscience that I killed a man who was committing a deadly crime than that I had failed to do so and let an innocent party be killed by him when it was in my power and perhaps my responsibility to do something. These issues are very, very difficult. Many Christians oversimplify them, but they're much more complex than many believe.

You know, the Anabaptists, they just say never get involved, never, never resist an evil man. And God might bless them in that area. The early Christians took that view.

But other Christians have felt very strongly that you should definitely, you know, oppose Adolf Hitler, for example. And save innocent lives. Of course, in opposing him, we killed some innocent lives, too, because we did some firebombing of Dresden and we also nuked Hiroshima and so forth.

And I mean, there's some innocent people killed by us, too. So it's a really complex matter. The war issue.

But when it comes to defending the innocent, we can say this much. For all that Jesus said about not resisting the evil man and turning the other cheek and so forth, he did not address in those places the situation of defending another person, only defending yourself. And I think Christians should be willing to absorb injury and to absorb loss rather than to impose it even on a bad person.

Unless it is truly what we consider to be the loving thing to stop him. I mean, if my child was about to do something, stick his stick, a knife in the electric socket, I would stop him. If the only way I could do it is to throw something out and knock him down.

And he got hurt doing it, but he didn't get killed by the electric socket. Then hurting him is what the right thing would be, the loving thing to do. And some people who are about to commit crimes, perhaps hurting them to stop them is a very loving thing to do, because if they actually go through with it, they may really have to regret it.

Or they might even get themselves executed for it if they carry it out. So, I mean, there is such a thing as hurting people out of love for them. Disciplining a child is an example of that.

And so I do not make rules for other people about how to act in a in a criminal situation where someone's when you're being victimized or someone else being victimized near there and you can do something about it. But I do think it's something that Christians often just act without thinking as much as they should about. Definitely is a complex ethical issue.

Now, it says in verse five, chapter 22, verse five, if a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed and let loose his animal and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out and catches in thorns so that it's stacked grain, standing grain or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. So that's that's just reasonable.

You cause the damage, your animal or your fire. You are responsible for it. You restore as much as the damage was, but from the very best of your stuff.

You can't take the refuse of yours and restore the volume from that. You have to use the best you have. If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep and is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double.

If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods. In other words, he may claim that it was stolen from him, but he is the one who stole it. So let's go to the judges to have that decided for any kind of trespass, whether it concern an ox, a donkey, a sheep or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing, which another claims to be his.

The cause of both parties shall come before the judges and whomever the judges condemned shall pay double to his neighbor. If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey or an ox, a sheep or any beast to keep for him and it dies, is hurt or driven away, no one seeing it, then an oath of the Lord shall be between them both that it has that he has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods and the owner of it shall accept that and he shall not make it good. That is the.

OK, here's the thing. If somebody leaves their possessions with you to keep for them for some reason. You have to give them back in the same condition.

Now, if they leave an animal with you and an animal dies because of your negligence, then you have to replace the animal double. But if it's not your negligence and it's just your bad luck, the animal is going to die that day anyway. And it happened to be while I was with you instead of with its owner.

Then you're not really responsible for that. And you need to take an oath when the owner comes back. I swear by Yahweh that I didn't do anything to cause this.

And then you're free. You don't have to do anything about it, because I mean, the guy left it with you. You were doing him a favor by watching it for him.

And then it was just your bad luck that the animal died or something happened to it. That wasn't your fault. Well, there's no reason why you should have to bear the loss that the owner should bear the loss of it as if it was in his own keeping at the time.

But if in fact it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. Now, I don't know exactly what that means unless it means the the one the one who kept it stole it, then the one who kept it has to make restitution for it as if any like any thief would. If it is torn to pieces by an animal, then he shall bring it as evidence and he shall not make good what is torn.

Now, this is assuming that the sheep or some kind of an animal that would be victimized by a predator and you find the pieces of the animal was obvious. If you see an animal, a carcass torn up that the that no human being has butchered it and it's the remnants of what an animal has done. So the one who is borrowing it shall take the pieces to the real owner and say, look, obviously, a bear got this or a lion got this animal and then he's not responsible for it.

Now, Jacob was held responsible for those things when he was tending sheep for labor. You remember, he mentions that he said, whether whether it was torn or stolen by night or day or whether while we start, you made me pay for it. So Jacob said that he was treated with less kindness by Laban in this matter than the law itself would require at a later date, of course.

And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor and it becomes injured or died, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good. But if it's owner was with it, he shall not make it good. If it was hired, it came for his hire.

Now, this is not verse 14, not canceling out with the earlier verses said it's taking them as for granted that, you know, if you borrow an animal and it dies through your negligence, you would normally be responsible for it. But if the owner was with you at the time that you're being negligent, then the owner has a greater responsibility than you do to watch over his own stuff. So if it dies or if something happens to it while you and the owner are together with it, then you're not responsible for it.

The owner is responsible for it. And if he had hired it or rented it to you, for example, if you had hired his ox to pull your plow and it was accidentally killed by in some means broke its leg or something by accident, you don't have to make it good because it was hired. That's what you paid him for.

He took the risk by charging money to let his ox out. And if a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride price of virgins.

Now, this law seems strange to us, but it's really not, you know, inconsiderate to the girl. Sometimes critics of the Bible, like Richard Dawkins, like to misrepresent the biblical laws, and they take a lot like this, say a woman had to marry her rapist. There's no reference to rape here.



There's reference to seduction. The girl is seduced. She's enticed.

She she willingly sleeps with a guy. Now, this applies if neither of them are married or she's not married and she's not betrothed. The situation is different if she's married to someone else or betrothed.

If a man entices a woman who's married or betrothed, then he and she have to be put to death. That's adultery. But this is considered to be a situation where neither of them is unavailable to marry.

She's not married. He's not married. And she's a virgin.

She's not betrothed to anybody. She's available. He sleeps with her.

This is not a rape. He enticed her and they have to get married. The penalty is they have to get married.

And however, the girl's father has the right to veto that. You see, after all, in that society, you had to have the father's permission to marry a daughter. And one could have been envisaged a situation where a man asks a father, can I marry your daughter? But the but the suitor is totally unacceptable to the father is just not the kind of person to prove his daughter married and the father does know.

Well, if that's true, they could go out and entice the girl, sleep with her and say, now you have to let me marry her because the law says so. The father still has the power to veto. No, not true.

You just have to pay me money now that you don't get her. And what the man has to pay is the bride price for a virgin. What that means is when a man wanted to marry a man's daughter, he had to pay the father a price because the father is losing a valuable member of his household, a productive member of the household, no likelihood.

And therefore, the groom pays to get the wife. But most men, almost all men, wanted to marry a virgin. A woman who is not a virgin was considered to be considerably less desirable.

And a father whose daughter was not a virgin would not be able to command as high a bride price for her. And so if a man enticed a girl and took her virginity away and did not marry her because the father wouldn't let him. Well, she is now kind of damaged goods.

The father cannot get the price of a bride of a virgin for his daughter from the next man who wants to marry her. So the man who took her virginity away is the one who has to pay the bride price of a virgin, though he doesn't get her. So he either is, you know, if the father approves, the man has to marry her.

And if father doesn't approve, then the man has to pay the same price as if he did marry,

but he doesn't get the girl. He just pays the money, but doesn't get the girl. Now, by the way, if the girl did not want to marry the man.

Obviously, she shouldn't have slept with him, should have resisted the seduction. But even after that, she could perhaps prevail with her father and say, don't let him marry me. Don't get me to him.

And the father who cared about his daughter's well-being could deny it. So it's not like a man could just rape a girl and claim her as his wife that way. Sometimes people make it sound like that, but they're not really paying attention to what the law is actually saying here.

Now, by the way, this is also stated to be true of a man enticing a virgin. And that is because a woman can only lose her virginity once. And a virgin was considered to be more desirable as a potential wife than a woman who had been with someone else.

And so, for example, this doesn't apply to situations where a man has slept with a prostitute, let's say, or with some other woman who's had other men. There are some men, some Christian men, who if they had to marry every woman they slept with before they were Christians, there'd be an awful lot of them. But most of those women were probably not virgins at the time.

And under the law, he would have to marry any virgin that he defrocked unless her father did not allow it. It says in verse 18, you should not permit a sorceress to live. That would be a witch.

Whoever lies with a beast shall surely be put to death. And that's talking about bestiality, that's sexual relations. He who sacrifices to any God except the Lord only.

He shall utterly be destroyed. You shall never mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. So a foreigner in your land.

This would apply to Israel today with the Palestinians who are foreigners in their land. Of course, the Jews are not, you know, God, God would rather have the Jews be Christians than than Jews, because he wants them to follow Christ, not the law of Moses. The law of Moses has been superseded by Christ.

And a Jew who becomes a Christian is not necessarily under the law. But if a Jew is rejecting Christianity and wants to live under the law, the law itself puts restrictions on the amount of abortion. Oppression that can be put on a foreigner in their land, and therefore they they should not oppress the Palestinians in their land either today or anyone else.

You should not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way and they cry it all to me, I will surely hear their cry and my wrath will become hot and I will

kill you with the sword and your wives will be widows and your children will be fatherless. If you lend money to any of my people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a money lender to him.

You should not charge him interest. If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before he goes. The sun goes down for that is only covering.

It is his garment for his skin. What shall he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to me, I will hear for I'm gracious. So money lenders are, I should say, not money lenders, but people who lent money.

To the poor were not large, allowed to charge interest, they're not to be like a money lender. They could not charge interest. And they also if they took collateral from a poor person, there's not many things that poor person has, but the clothes he's wearing.

And so you could take his cloak as collateral, but you have to give it back to him at night to sleep in. So, you know, he you're not supposed to be cruel. Obviously, the guy is poor.

He's disadvantaged. You got to have some compassion on him. He needs that to sleep in.

And if you oppress the poor and take advantage of his poverty by charging interest or by making life hard on him, then he says, if he cries to me, I'm going to hear what God will do after that. We're not told. Verse 28, you should not revile God nor curse a ruler of your people.

You may remember that Paul ended up quoting this as he apologized for doing just that. He was on trial before the Sanhedrin. And in Acts 23, verse one, it says, Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him that it's the high priest. God will strike you.

You whitewash wall for you sit to judge me according to the law. And do you command me to be struck contrary to the law? And those who stood by said, do you revile God's high priest? Then Paul said, I didn't know, brethren, that he was the high priest for it is written, you shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people. So he quotes this verse here in Exodus.

Now, I don't know why Paul didn't know his high priest. Some say it was because of Paul's bad eyesight. Some say that the priest had turned over since Paul had been in Jerusalem, he'd come back and didn't recognize this high priest or whatever.

But whatever it was, he apologized, quoting this verse. You shall not revile God or curse the rule of your people. Exodus 22, 29.

You shall not delay to offer the first of your right produce. And your juices, the firstborn of your sons, you shall give to me. Likewise, shall you do with the oxen and your sheep.

This was, of course, laid out in earlier in Exodus chapter 13 in detail. Then he says it shall be with its mother seven days and on the eighth day you should give it to me. So the animal that is the Lord should stay at home with his mother till it's eight days old, till its eyes were open and it was healthy enough to actually have a little bit of meat on its bones.

Then it would be offered to the Lord. And you shall be holy to me, holy men to me. You shall not eat any meat which is torn by beasts in the field.

And you shall throw it to the dogs. So if you have an animal that's good for food and it gets torn by beasts in the field, you're not allowed to eat it. For one thing, it's been in contact with an unclean animal.

Any predator is an unclean animal. And therefore, your cow or your sheep has been defiled by contact with an unclean animal. But also, of course, if you find it in the field like that, it's impossible to have the blood drained out properly to eat it.

It's very important to the Jews to drain all the blood out of the carcass as soon as they butcher it so that they wouldn't eat any blood. But if you find a carcass, it's obviously blood can be congealed in it and so forth. You're not going to be able to have the meat prepared properly.

So you just lose that. You don't get to eat that meat. You have to give that to the dogs.

All right, there's one more chapter of these laws, but we're going to take a break and we'll come back to finish this off. Chapter 23. .