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Exodus CH 21.

I will do a veterans day message tomorrow...

In CH 20 we saw the Law being given. Well, the beginning was the 10 commandments. The 10 utterances.

This first section of this text (CH 21) deals with what we might call primary social issues.

Issues addressed in this section include the treatment of Hebrew slaves (servants), personal injuries, theft and property damage, sexual abuse, and mistreatment of others.

We must keep in mind that the Israelites had just emerged from 400 years of slavery in Egypt.

They had not worshipped their GOD the GOD but instead had lived under the Egyptian laws and false gods.

Now their GOD has to instruct HIS people how to live as a free nation. Later will come how they are to specifically worship HIM.

The Israelites are not to pervert justice for ill motives, and balance in the administration of justice is essential.

/The measure-for-measure principle eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand does not

imply that literal hands and eyes are to be removed but that rather that punishment must fit the crime. Including in the case of murder, life for life.

The master-servant relationship was part of the widespread ancient social cultural structure, and the Israelites, emerging from their own harsh bondage, are to be particularly sensitive to mistreatment of slaves. This will prevent abuse of others...

/The Hebrew word עֶבֶד ebed means both slave and servant. It is from the Hebrew root word abad עָבַד ābad which means to serve. So, it is not to be interpreted as the

picture of brutal slavery that one has here in America.

Because there is a provision for selling oneself into bondage in order to deal with unmanageable debt (CH 22).

A male servant does not have to buy his freedom but can leave at the end of six years if he chooses to do so.

If, however, he loves his master, or his master has given to him a wife whom he loves, he can continue to serve his master.

Yes, it was common practice in the ancient Near East for a master to breed slaves by giving the slave a wife.

Good break here. So we go to CH 21. Now I will say most or many preachers or teachers just skip over these next 2 CH or 3 CH. We will not.

/Remember, the LORD is teaching HIS people how to live in the land that HE will give them. They are not there yet, but within a generation they will be. And they need to know what HE expects of them. In how they treat each other and how they will worship HIM.

**1 “Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them: (the laws for the nation)**

Remember the 10 Commandments have been given.

**2 “If you buy (kaw naw = to get, acquire however that is done), obtain a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.**

Now remember the command not to steal another human being was already given.

Again, the importance of trying to understand that term slave, it also is servant. A servant could be paying off a debt by working for the own to whom the debt was owed.

Also notice it was a Hebrew ibri servant. The servant slave could be a foreigner who was obtained by

various means. Also it could be another Hebrew who was paying off a debt or a work bond relationship.

/Notice the 6-1 pattern. The LORD created all in 6 days and rested. The sabbath was 6 days of work and a day of rest. The fields were farmed for 6 years and then given a year off.

Don't know if farmers still do that, but in my day...Later the Israelites didn't do that and the LORD put them for 70 years and Babylonian captivity. Also 6000 years and then the Millennial.

**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.**

/There were 4 basic ways that a Hebrew could become a slave or servant to another Hebrew.

In extreme poverty (LEV 25:39).

A father might sell a daughter as a servant into a home with the intention that she would eventually marry into that family (Vs 7).



In the case of bankruptcy, a man might become servant to his creditors (2KING 4:1).

If a thief had nothing with which to pay proper restitution (EXO 22).

The ideas of man-stealing and life-long servitude, the concepts many have of slavery, and much of that was the case in history and still exists in some places, simply do not apply to the practice of slavery in the Old Testament amongst the Israelites.

Normally in the Hebrew culture, slavery was: Chosen or mutually arranged. And it was of limited duration. Those rules are set forth here.

**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.**

Where we get the term earmarked. Well later it was done to livestock, but it comes from this verse. But notice there is a willingness to do so.

A man who could not meet his debts, who was financially

insolvent, could give or sell himself into service for six years.

This was done by piercing the ear; the ear is regarded throughout the Bible as symbolizing obedience.

Remember he had the option of being freed in the seventh year (completion). It was one of the rules of this bond service among the Hebrews, a rule that you will not find elsewhere.

There was also that provision for slaves voluntarily to stay on in the service of their masters.

It is interesting that the words obey and hear are the same word shah mayah or shawmah in the Hebrew language.

So his ear was pierced to give a sign that he was voluntarily staying on at his own choosing.

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

Meaning she was not free to go after 6 years. Why would a father do this?

Well here the idea is that the father is poor and the daughter will have a better life where a young man her own age who will take care of her.

**8 “If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated (offer to or married her) 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.**

So, there was protection for the women.

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

The master here is to treat her as if she was his own daughter.

**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. reduce her food, her clothing, or her right to intimacy. The master was to treat her well, no notice no abuse.**

Now this treatment of slaves was not recognized by other cultures. Including, Roman, Greek slavery. And there are still situations of this with human trafficking around the world. But is NOT the same thing here.

So, you can also see the expansion the details of the 10 utterances that the LORD gave earlier.

/Those who do not have anyone to stand up for themselves, GOD stands up for.

Those who need someone to look after them, GOD is their guardian. Widows and orphans have lost their men and they do not have a man to stand up for them now, to protect them, so GOD does.

It is a wonderful thread of teaching that goes right through the Psalms: that GOD is a father to the fatherless, the husband to the husbandless.

What we do to the helpless, we must reckon with HIM. It is an amazing concept.

You notice that in this case he does not say it is direct injury to them. It is not what you do to them it is what you withhold from them that GOD counted as guilty.

From the very beginning, the Church has had a special concern for those who had no one to look after them?

The history of orphanages in our world came from GOD. I know there were abuses but that was evil not good and not what GOD intended.

GOD is teaching the Israelites that the principle of repayment is a very important one and he will hold people responsible for it. Of



course, by extension and application the same applies to us in HIS client nation. Although again, sadly the justice system has been corrupted.

Three things GOD wants from HIS people: **Submission, Service and Separation.**

/The covenant we have with our LORD is composed first of all of **Submission** or obedience. Not to rebel against our GOD, not to fight HIS word or HIS will, but to submit to everything HE tells us.

/Secondly, **Service** – which includes worship. When they are told to serve the LORD their GOD it is to worship.

To serve GOD includes your worship and your work you're your daily life.

/Thirdly, **Separation** – we are to have nothing whatever to do with other religions, or other gods. Because all other gods are false gods and take the place of the One True GOD.

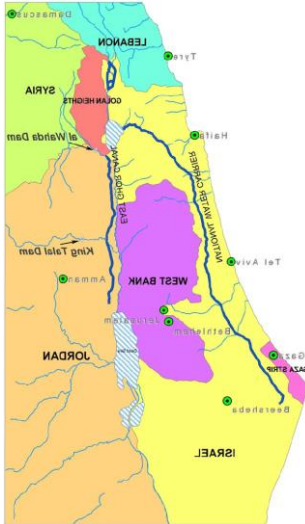
GOD knows that if you start playing about with other religions, if you start dabbling in other things, sooner or later the truth suffers.

GOD is showing us that if we submit to HIM, if we serve HIM, if we separate from living in and of

the world, then HE will provide for us.

/First, GOD will fight our battles for you, get the victory and get us into blessing. Of course, we are to bless others.

Secondly, he will enlarge your borders. The borders listed here Israel has never had. The ground that Israel has by title deeds from GOD, they have never had.



In the time of Solomon they had maybe a third of it or less, but it stretches a way up to the borders

of the Euphrates River. I believe that when GOD says these are your boundaries HE means it. And when you hear from the river to the sea as a cry from the enemies of Israel. It means one thing...

Therefore, the Middle East is going to be troubled until the end of this age, all the way through the tribulation.

Until Christ comes back to be their king. The Middle East is GOD's barometer or thermometer and what happens there reflects the events of world history. Therefore the trends are what we watch.

Just to wrap up this section of text:  
Women were in a different  
position in that time.

/In that social context it was not  
possible for a woman to live  
independently apart from the  
protection of a father, husband, or  
even a master.

When a father sold his daughter to  
be a servant in a stable household,  
he did so in order to ensure her  
security. That could involve  
marriage either to the master or to  
his son.

Even the possibility of her going  
free if her master does not provide  
her with the basics of food,

clothing, and marital rights if married.

She is not to be cast off, either by being sold to foreigners (21:8) or by becoming abused or neglected in the extended family context.

Well that is the first section of the CH. Next the LORD addresses what we would call personal injury. Today there are legitimate lawsuits for neglect, but the other side look at commercials...slip and fall lawyers...

**12 He who strikes** (nah khah = strike or smite and the result is death) **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.**

6 cities of refuge where the judges were selected to deal with this, where there would be a fair trial by a fair impartial judge. The principle for capital punishment goes back to

**/GEN 9:6: Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of GOD HE made man.**

GOD told the judges of Israel to look for evidence of premeditation and evil doing.



GOD did not place accidents, or self-defense or war or capitol punishment on the same plane as crimes of premeditation and treachery. In the case of convicted killers they are to be put to death.

The principle of punishing murderers is so important to GOD that HE denied murderers refuge at HIS altar.



/A religious altar was a place of sanctuary against injustice or vengeance. An accused man might

find safety if he could flee to an altar before he was caught.

The accused would catch hold of the projecting ‘horns’ of the altar (1KING 2:28). This was tantamount to dedicating himself to YHWH, like any animal sacrifice bound with ropes to the altar horns.

GOD told the judges of Israel there was to be no mercy in the sentencing of those guilty of the worst murders, what we might call first-degree murder.

GOD said, **“You shall take him from MY altar, that he may die.”** The murderer was to find no

protection in misunderstood,  
misapplied faith.

**/NUM 35:31, If anyone kills a person, the murderer is to be put to death on the testimony of the witnesses. But no one is to be put to death based on the testimony of a lone witness. You are not to accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who deserves to die; he must surely be put to death.**

The principle that unpunished murders defile a land is a sobering thought among Americans, where so many are murdered, and few murderers are brought to justice for those murders.

There were record homicide cases in 2022 in over a dozen of largest cities in America. One reason is people who are here who are unvetted, or maybe chosen... another is a corrupt justice system. The real reason is the KOD has a plan for complete chaos.

/One might ask: If GOD is for punishing those who murder what about Cain? Well, GOD can do what HE wants first and foremost.

Also Cain was sorta a poster child for GOD's mercy. BUT look at what Cain said about his punishment: It is worse than I can bear. Whatever the mark that Cain had on his head, he had to have it

for much of his 700 years on this earth.

**14 “If, however, a man acts presumptuously (zood = to boil up or seeth) anger toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily (indicating premeditated, like from anger), you are to take him even from MY altar, that he may die.**

So even if he is at the alter of refuge.

**15 “He who strikes (nah khah = strikes and kills) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.**

/Dishonoring parents by physical or verbal abuse, is a violation of

the fifth commandment, is punishable by death. Here the word for strike means death results so some debate on that.

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

Kidnapping was also considered a capital offense. In the eyes of GOD, criminally enslaving a man was not far removed from murdering him.

/Kidnapping for slavery was common in the ancient world, and is here clearly prohibited.

This is an important difference between slavery as it was (and is)

commonly practiced and slavery as regulated in the Bible.

Most slavery (ancient and modern) was actually a form of kidnapping, that is, the taking and imprisoning of a person against their will. And that was prohibited by GOD...

As regulated in the Bible (and as practiced in some other ancient cultures), slavery was received willingly (usually as payment for debt) or, in the case of war, was an alternative to death.

I can't say that in ancient Israel, other cultures were not taken in later wars.

**17 He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.**

The idea was of an adult child who threatened their parent with violence. The idea of the curse here is more like what we would think of as a death threat.

This is not swearing at them, which is a violation of honoring parents.

This law was severe, it preserved a critical foundation for a civilized society: Respect between generations is very important to GOD.

The Law of Moses also had a built-in protection for the rights of



the child, according to DEU 21:18-21 (stoning of the rebellious teenager).

/This passage states that the parent did not have the right to carry out this punishment, but they were required to bring the accused child before the elders and judges of the city.

According to tradition and historical writings, the judges of Israel rarely if ever administered the death penalty in such cases, yet the child was held accountable and probably got the message. Rabbis historians say it never happened...

The law discouraging conflict between generations is important.

Each elder generation, as they grow older, is at the mercy of the younger generation.

If the younger generation is allowed to carry on open warfare with the older generation, the very foundations of society are shaken.

**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.**

/If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other: If, because of a conflict, a man was injured and unable to work (confined to his bed), the one who injured him must pay compensation to the man and his family.

However, if the man could recover from the injury, the guilty party was only required to pay for his medical recovery and for his lost time.

So, here is personal injury law in its early form anyway. Though these principles have been abused by the greedy in our modern day, the principles themselves still stand as sound.

In the VA and other places, a workman's comp claim, is sometimes abused...

There is big business in the business of catching people cheating the system. Often they violate privacy laws, so they cheat to catch the cheater.

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

Because that is murder.

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

**LXX21:21 But if [the servant] continue to live a day or two, let not [the master] be punished; for he is his money.**

The day or 2 is really day after day, so the idea is there was no injury. Not that 2 days of survival...

Injury to a free person means the guilty one the one who caused the injury has to compensate for lost time.

The point here was that if a person injures his own slave, no punishment is required because the slave is his property. Unless of course there is murder.

/It is important to note that in all the other cultures at that time, the master had complete and total control over the slave. He could and did simply kill them if the slave fell out of favor. Here GOD sets these rules.

**22 “If men (ish plural) struggle with each other and strike (naw gaf) a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury (to the woman or the child), 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, (if a death**

occurs the men shall die, this would apply to the child as well)

**/24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,**

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

Lex talionis lex = law and talionis = of the same nature. Man's retribution is one eye, for 2 eyes. A tooth for a complete denture etc.

**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.**

Well that is good, I guess.

Next what about people's responsibility regarding their livestock, which is their property. And they are responsible for our property...

**28 “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned (everybody must get stoned, bob dylan...) 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.**

Wow, every stupid pit bull owner...well dog owners who know their dogs...

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

So instead of death the owner can negotiate a payment.

**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.**

Notice 30 pieces of silver is the price of a slave...

**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.**

Well, he gets a dead ox at the bottom of his well.

**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.**

So next we go to CH 22. But I will  
do a veterans day message  
tomorrow it might be live...