

## Exodus 21

- Now that the Law have been delivered, the narrative returns to describing the state of the people gathered around the mountain

[Ex. 20:18](#) All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance.

[Ex. 20:19](#) Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die."

[Ex. 20:20](#) Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

[Ex. 20:21](#) So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

- It's important to assemble an accurate timeline concerning the events of chapter 20
  - This scene began in chapter 19 after Moses had met the Lord on the mountain, when the Lord said

[Ex. 19:9](#) The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

- Following this, Moses descended to the base of the mountain where the people were waiting, and we learned this...

[Ex. 19:16](#) So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

[Ex. 19:17](#) And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

[Ex. 19:18](#) Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

[Ex. 19:19](#) When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.

- Then in chapter 20, we have the content of what the Lord spoke to Moses and the people, that is the Ten Commandments
  - It appears the people didn't perceive the content of God's words so much as they were simply terrified of the whole experience
    - They heard thunder, see lightning, hear the sound of a trumpet and see the mountain smoking
    - And the thunder grew every louder as the conversation progressed
  - And then we see the effect God's words had upon the people
    - They are so afraid from having heard the voice of God, they turn to Moses and demand to hear no more
    - They say they want him to carry out all further communication with the Lord
    - And then Moses will relate it to them
- Moses calms the people by reassuring them that they won't have to hear the Lord's voice any longer
  - But it was necessary to hear from Him directly at least this one time so that the people could personally experience the fear of the Lord
  - And by their fear, they would be encouraged not to sin
  - But as we learn later, the fear of the Lord isn't enough to ensure proper behavior
- After that, Moses leaves the people and approaches the cloud, where he will receive the rest of the Law
  - The thick cloud hid God's glory from the people
    - But the Lord allowed Moses to see His glory in some form
    - We'll learn more about this later in Ex 34
  - Now we move forward in the Law to Moses
    - The next laws God delivers relate to the altar of worship and the Jewish Bill of Rights, as it is known

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

[Ex. 20:23](#) ‘You shall not make other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves.

[Ex. 20:24](#) ‘You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.

[Ex. 20:25](#) ‘If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it.

[Ex. 20:26](#) ‘And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it.’

- The Lord is about to prescribe instructions on how He should be worshipped corporately, but He prefaces these instructions with a warning in vs.22-23
  - As the nation endeavors to worship the Lord, they must be careful never to violate the second commandment by creating idols to represent God
    - The Lord knew this would be a persistent temptation for Israel
    - Whenever their minds turn to worshipping the Lord, Who is all Spirit, the tendency is to create something physical in His place
      - Israel long struggled with this problem
      - And men still struggle with it today
  - When we engage in worship, men want “bells and smells” as the saying goes
    - We exist in the physical world, so we try to bring God closer to us by creating a physical representation of God, which is a graven image and an idol
    - There were pagan idols, there were Jewish idols, and we have American idols today
    - Today our graven images may be more sophisticated but they are equally corrupting
      - Ancient idols took the form of figurines of wood or stone
        - Some still erect statues in church
      - But more often, our spiritual crutches come in the form of crosses, or altars, or even the buildings themselves

- Like figures made of wood, we assign man-made objects with greater spiritual significance than they deserve
- Confining the spiritual to the physical is a constant struggle for our flesh, and it is a sin
  - But Jesus told us that the day had come when the Lord's followers would worship in Spirit and Truth
  - He was referring to a true worship that happens completely divorced from physical relics or any other substitutes for the Spirit
    - Today, we have no physical temple...the Lord dwells in us
    - No assigned priests...we are all priests
    - No altars...no more sacrifice is required
    - No basins, no incense, nothing physical required under the Law is required today for us to approach and worship
  - Neither should be endeavor to replace them with new physical relics
- Speaking of worshipping under the Law, the Lord gives the instructions constructing an altar in vs.24-26
  - Most of the sacrificial and ceremonial rules for worship are provided in Leviticus, since Leviticus deals with the priesthood
    - But in Exodus we receive the instructions on the altar
    - And later the construction of the tabernacle
  - God instructed the Jews to build two different types of altars
    - The Lord directs both the place and the style of altars which may be built for worship
    - First, God assigns the locations for every altar
      - Before the Law, the patriarchs would set up altars wherever they wished
      - Usually, they built altars on the occasion of God's revelation or great work in their life

- So formal worship was a response to God revealing Himself
- Now, worship was to become an institution of everyday life
  - And therefore, the manner and place of worship is determined by the Lord
  - There is a message embedded in this change
  - The message is that men must approach the Lord on His terms, not ours
  - The formality of the Law creates a structure in which our approach is regulated
  - As Paul said, the Law kept men under custody until Christ came
- The design of the altar is also intended to communicate how sinful men approach the Lord
  - First, altars could be earth or stone
    - The altars would be a place of sacrifice
      - A table where an animal or other offering place placed on top and burned
    - Altars are places of sacrifices
      - They are not religious objects decorating houses of worship
      - They certainly shouldn't be a substitute for a table
      - Churches should never feature altars, since doing so implies a need for sacrifice
      - And Christ's sacrifice was sufficient for all time, so that no new sacrifice will ever be necessary nor acceptable to the Lord
  - If a stone altar was to be built, the stone could not be cut or shaped by tools
    - Canaanite altars used in their pagan worship practices were typically elaborate and artfully constructed

- So this law had the effect of separating Israel from the surrounding people
- Which is one of the ten purposes of the Law we studied
- But there is a spiritual message in this requirement
  - The altar is a place where men address the sin that separates them from God
  - So our worship of God depends on having something appease God's wrath for our sin
  - Our sin separates us from God, so until something addresses the problem of our sin, worship isn't possible
  - That's the reason that worship took place at an altar
    - Atonement for sin was the means for entering into worship
    - And it was the means by which the Lord could entertain our worship
- Now consider what it would mean if the object designated for sacrifice was constructed by men using tools to work the stone into shape
  - It would send a message that by our work, men participated in atoning our sin
  - The altar would stand as a testimony to man's work, with craftsmen reflecting in pride upon their handiwork
  - They could boast of how they contributed to make possible the atonement that permitted men to worship God
    - This was the problem Paul was talking about in Ephesian 2 when he wrote about the God's manner of salvation

**Eph. 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

**Eph. 2:9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**Eph. 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- The Lord has done all the work of salvation, so the altar must reflect that spiritual truth

- The stones were to be left as they were in nature, just as God formed them
- Men can not participate in their own salvation
- And the construction of the altar reflected that truth
- Finally, the altar couldn't have stairs leading up to it, meaning the altar wasn't position in an exalted place
  - The reason for this prohibition, according to the Lord, was to prevent the priests' backsides to be exposed when they walked up stairs
  - Men wore robes and tunics, and like ladies' dresses today, if you walk high enough, you expose yourself
  - This was also different from the pagan priests of the day
    - Some cultures demanded that their priests or ministry leaders officiate entirely in the nude
    - I'm grateful the Lord changed that rule!
- There is another picture formed in the way God forbids the priests' nakedness from being exposed at the altar
  - The ultimate purpose of sacrificial atonement is to cover the nakedness of man's sin
    - Remember, when Adam sinned, he discovered his physical nakedness
    - This new awareness was the awakening of a sinful conscience
  - The awareness Adam experienced was his jeopardy before God because of his sin
    - Adam's sin was exposed before God leaving Adam vulnerable to judgment
    - His conscience reflected this change in his spiritual nature
    - And it manifested itself as a fear of being naked, of physical exposure
  - God programmed our conscience to reflect our spiritual state

- When we are innocent before God, we carry no sense of shame or vulnerability
- When we are guilty, we feel the instinctive need to hide ourselves
  - So God commands the priests to hide their nakedness
- Chapters 21-23 begin the next section of the Law
  - This section is called the section ordinances, as the opening verse of chapter 21 tells us
    - It concerns the basic civil rights of Jewish society
      - In these laws you have the rights of individuals
      - And the consequences for the violation of those rights
    - Many of these laws are reflected in our laws today
  - As we move through this section, we will take time in places to examine the laws in details, especially as they may relate to Christ or NT Law
    - But we will not stop and study each law in equal detail

[Ex. 21:1](#) "Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them:

[Ex. 21:2](#) "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

[Ex. 21:3](#) "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.

[Ex. 21:4](#) "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.

[Ex. 21:5](#) "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,'

[Ex. 21:6](#) 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.

- The first section of the ordinances deal with the rights of slaves in Jewish society
  - Immediately, we are struck by an apparent contradiction over how rights could be expressed in the context of slavery



- Isn't slavery wrong to begin with and therefore, why does God seem to condone here?
- The answer is that our notion of slavery and the kind of slavery that is in view here are totally different
- First, notice that the slavery discussed here involves a Hebrew slave, according to v.2
  - One Hebrew is "bought" by another Hebrew and becomes a slave
  - How does one Hebrew come up for sale within the nation of Israel?
    - The answer provides our first distinction between slavery in the Law and the form of slavery practiced in our nation and elsewhere
    - The Hebrew becomes a slave because he places himself up for sale
    - In other words, the person volunteers to become a slave (or servant) of another Hebrew
- Why would a Hebrew sell himself to another man as a servant?
  - In most cases, it was to settle a debt
  - If a Hebrew had indebted himself so much that he could not pay the debt with his assets, then he had to work off his debt
  - Since his debtors demanded immediate payment of the debt, the man couldn't wait to earn the money through normal employment
  - So instead, he sold himself as a slave
    - In a sense, he was taking his wages in advance and then received no paid for his work
    - But he also gave up his rights as a free man
- A Hebrew slave was the property of his owner, since he was bought with a price
  - He worked for free because his wages had already been paid up front when he was purchased

- Obviously, such an arrangement could be easily abused
  - A desperate debtor might agree to very unfair terms
- So the Law stepped in to limit the number of years someone could remain a slave
- At the end seven years, the slave must be set free
  - Obviously, this law also limited how much someone could sell themselves for, since the buyer was limited to seven years of labor
- The Law further clarified that families were not be broken up
  - If a man entered with a wife, he left with his wife
    - If the man took an interest in one of the masters daughters or other servants, then he could marry
    - But if he did so, he could not automatically take those people with him when he left slavery
      - The slave must redeem his new family by paying a bride price to the master
      - Or he could leave them behind to work off that price, just as he had worked off his own debt
      - Or he could stay with them and remain a permanent member of the household with his family
  - Now if this doesn't sound fair, give careful thought to how this circumstance would play out
    - First, a slave new these rules existed
    - So when he decided to accept a wife from the master, he knew he was setting himself up for a difficult decision at the seven year point
      - He was a slave, so he likely wouldn't be able to pay the bride price
      - So essentially, he was taking on more debt by accepting the wife

- This meant he was marrying knowing he would need to leave his wife and children behind until he could redeem them
- Obviously, this would be a severe hardship, so having a family would be a strong incentive to remain in the master's house
  - So a master had incentive to offer a good slave a wife
  - He knew this would make it less likely that the servant would leave after seven years
- So in vs.5-6, the Lord makes a provision for a slave to voluntarily becoming a permanent servant in the household
  - He would announced his intentions to stay permanently
    - Essentially, the man was applying for permanent, life-long employment
    - He would have the care of his master
    - He would never worry again about housing, food, or unemployment
  - This was a decision that couldn't be reversed
    - So a permanent mark was made by piercing his ear with an awl nailed through the ear to a doorpost
    - This designation makes this servant a "bondservant" or bonds slave
  - This is why the NT epistles authors frequently refer to themselves as bondservants of Christ
    - We have been bought with a price to become slaves of Christ
      - But in our walk as disciples of Christ, we are also voluntarily committing ourselves to following serving and obeying Jesus forever
      - We are slaves, in the sense that we can never again be released from our relationship with Jesus
      - But we are bonds slaves because our service to Jesus is a conscious choice we make in our walk

- These rules applied to male slaves, but female slaves had different rights
  - So the ordinances regarding female slaves differed

[Ex. 21:7](#) “If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do.

[Ex. 21:8](#) “If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her.

[Ex. 21:9](#) “If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters.

[Ex. 21:10](#) “If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights.

[Ex. 21:11](#) “If he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.

- To understand this passage, once again we need to appreciate what the words mean and what the customs expected
  - In v.7 we hear of a father selling his daughter, as a female slave, and this sale would also have been done for similar economic reasons
    - He was in debt, and his daughter was of marrying age
    - So he sells her as a servant to another man to cancel a debt
    - Why would a father do this? Well, in reality he was doing what any father would do with his daughter, at least in a sense
    - He was finding his daughter a husband
  - Marriages were a two part process in ancient times
    - First, every bride was “bought”
    - A price was paid to the father for the privilege of taking his daughter as bride
      - Commonly, fathers bought brides for their sons
      - Sometimes, a groom bought a bride for himself, as in cases when his father had already passed away
    - Later, the wedding night occurs, and the marriage is consummated

- The two events were usually separated by months or years
- But in the meantime, After the price was paid, the girl was betrothed to her groom and belonged to the one who bought her
- We see this situation play out in the story of Isaac and Rebekah
  - Abraham's servant goes to Haran and buys Rebekah for Isaac
  - At that point, Rebekah belongs to Abraham until she marries Isaac
- So there was always money exchanged in some form when a bride was taken
  - In this case, the Law is speaking of a situation when a master takes a woman in exchanged for the cancellation of debt
    - He doesn't pay for the woman with a cash payment
    - And because she is taken in this way, her status in the new household is different
    - She is a slave girl or servant in the house, not a daughter
    - Because the girl was received in forgiveness of debt, she carries a lower status
    - On the other hand, if she marry's the master's son rather than another servant, then the Law says in v.9 that she is to be treat as a daughter in the family
  - So while the servant girl waits to marry, she serves as a slave girl or handmaiden in the household
    - But what if the girl is never given in marriage? What are here rights?
    - The law in v.7 addresses the rights of a slave girl who is not permitted to marry
      - If the delay stretches to seven years, the freedom rule doesn't apply according as it does for a male servant
      - The woman can't leave her servant status

- This may sound harsh, until we remember that a woman was always under the authority of either a father or husband
  - Since her father sold her, she was now under the authority of her master and future husband, so there was no divorce possible
- But in v.8, the Law says that if the master is displeased with her and won't allow her to marry, then he must allow another man to purchase her for marriage
  - But he cannot sell her to a foreign husband
  - The woman must be married to another member of Israel
  - If he will not marry her or sell her into marriage, then she must be released without a payment required so she can marry someone
  - In summary, an unmarried woman cannot be held in limbo indefinitely
    - She must be married to the one who paid the bride price
    - Or the master must allow someone else to purchase her
- Finally, the culture considered this slave wife to carry a different status than a free woman
  - Like Hagar and Sarah, the slave wife (or concubine) was considered secondary to a free wife
    - So a man who took a slave girl as wife would often seek for a second wife who was free
    - And when he took a second free wife, the slave wife was considered less valuable to the husband
    - Both the husband and the free wife would look down on the slave wife
  - So in vs.10-11 the Law addresses how a husband must treat his servant wife (a concubine) if he took another free wife
    - The slave wife must continue to receive all necessary provision, like food and clothing

- And the man must continue to do his duty as a husband to her and not deny her conjugal rights
- Clearly, these laws were intended to protect the slave wife from a vindictive free wife
  - We see these sins evident in the way Jacob's four wives quarreled with one another
- The Law is regulating the way men cared for concubines, but it isn't endorsing the practice of multiple marriages
  - The God's law is acknowledging the reality of multiple marriages without endorsing it or approving of it
    - This is one of the purposes of the Law
    - To regulate the sinful hearts of men
  - We might ask why God doesn't outlaw multiple marriages directly in His word
    - In fact, He does when He defines marriage as one husband, one wife, on flesh
    - And in the testimony of scripture, multiple marriages are consistently portrayed as negative and harmful to the family
    - Furthermore, NT teaching reinforces the importance of taking only one wife when it declares an elder must be "a man of one wife"
    - However, when a man chooses to take a second wife, his sin doesn't render the second marriage invalid
      - Like in the case of divorce, the second marriage is formed through an act of adultery, but it is still a one flesh relationship
      - Therefore, the man must honor his second marriage just as he should honor his first
      - Once again, we're not saying that multiple marriages are appropriate...they're not
      - But once a marriage is formed, it must be honored

- And so the Law addresses how to make the best of a sinful situation, once that situation has developed
  - We saw this principle at work in Deuteronomy 24
  - God acknowledged the reality of divorce and made grace available for the abandoned woman to minimize the negative effects of the husband's sin
  - But that accommodation wasn't an endorsement of the practice
  - Nor is this acknowledgment intended to be an endorsement of multiple marriages
  - In fact, by the time of Jesus day, multiple marriages were no longer permitted in Jewish society even though this provision still existed in the Law
- Finally, it's worth reiterating that the rights of slaves in Israel far exceeded the rights that other nations afforded to their slaves
  - The institution of slavery as defined in the Bible isn't sin, so long as we are talking about a very specific form of slavery
    - Biblical slavery practiced under the Law in Israel was a voluntary state, in which a man chose to enter to avoid paying a debt or to ensure life-long employment
    - Their prior choices put them in a position where slavery was their only escape, and they were grateful for the option
    - Today, we have a concept of bankruptcy, which brings its own consequences in our society
  - Scripture teaches that debt to others brings consequences, and when we have debt we are essentially the slave of another
    - Today we mean that euphemistically, but in the OT times, it was meant literally
  - Furthermore, slavery in the Biblical sense didn't involve mistreatment
    - If a slave was mistreated, the master was guilty of a crime (which we will see in v.20)
    - This is very different to slavery as it was practiced in the early years of our country or in many other places in the world



- Slaves didn't enter slavery voluntarily
  - They weren't set free after seven years
  - And they were mistreated terribly
  - This form of slavery is never allowed in scripture and is sinful
- So these laws are a reflection of God's grace in the way He provided for the slave's interests
    - And that's why the Bible acknowledges the reality of slavery as an institution
    - Under the Law's regulation of slavery, it becomes more of a job or employment opportunity than the thing we typically think of today
  - The next section of the ordinances runs until v.32 and deals with personal injury

[Ex. 21:12](#) "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

[Ex. 21:13](#) "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.

[Ex. 21:14](#) "If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him even from My altar, that he may die.

[Ex. 21:15](#) "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

[Ex. 21:16](#) "He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.

[Ex. 21:17](#) "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

[Ex. 21:18](#) "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,

[Ex. 21:19](#) 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.

[Ex. 21:20](#) "If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished.

[Ex. 21:21](#) "If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken; for he is his property.

[Ex. 21:22](#) "If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide.

[Ex. 21:23](#) “But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,

[Ex. 21:24](#) eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

[Ex. 21:25](#) burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

[Ex. 21:26](#) “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.

[Ex. 21:27](#) “And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth.

[Ex. 21:28](#) “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished.

[Ex. 21:29](#) “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.

[Ex. 21:30](#) “If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him.

[Ex. 21:31](#) “Whether it gores a son or a daughter, it shall be done to him according to the same rule.

[Ex. 21:32](#) “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.

[Ex. 21:33](#) “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,

[Ex. 21:34](#) the owner of the pit shall make restitution; he shall give money to its owner, and the dead animal shall become his.

[Ex. 21:35](#) “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.

[Ex. 21:36](#) “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.

- The first section in this passage regards homicide
  - Various kinds of homicide are addressed here
    - First, premeditated murder always results in death
    - The death penalty for murder is a legitimate and required penalty under the Law of God
    - In v.14 we’re told that this penalty should apply to everyone, even if you find the guilty party serving before the Lord’s altar
  - If the act was not premeditated, which we call manslaughter, then a different penalty applies

- That person would be sent to a city of refuge
  - It was refuge in the sense that it was a refuge from the death penalty
- Don't think these cities were a way to avoid punishment; on the contrary
  - The people in these cities never left, or else they could be rightly killed by their victim's families
- As long as they stayed in the city, they could remain alive
  - But they were isolated from family and the world forever
  - They were serving a sentence of life in prison
- From vs.18-27 we read a fascinating list of personal injury law, and the general theme throughout is "do the right thing by your neighbor"
  - When you harm someone, make restitution
    - If you fight and hurt someone, you compensate them for what they lost
    - And you care for them until they are well again
    - Unless they die, in which case see v.13
  - Then the Law lists other capital offenses
    - Striking parents and cursing parents was punishable by death
      - The Hebrew word for strike means to attack
      - Any attack against a parent was cause for death
        - Striking another adult carried a lesser penalty
      - There was no provision in Jewish law for treating minors differently than adults
        - If the child was mature enough to attack a parent in a deadly way, then he was old enough to pay the penalty
        - We can safely assume that these penalties were effective in discouraging such crimes
      - And kidnapping punished by death

- We can see how man's penalties for these offenses have eroded from where God established them
  - Perhaps this is why Paul says in 2Tim 3 that the last days will experience an outbreak of unprecedented evil including "disobedience to parents"
  - When Paul includes disobedience to parents in the same list as unholy, treacherous, haters of good, brutal, and others, then we know how serious the Lord views disobedience to parents
- In v.20-21, the rights of injured slaves is covered
  - Slaves couldn't be murdered but they could be disciplined by the master for rebellion or criminal acts
    - If the discipline resulted in immediate death, the master was punished like any other murderer
    - If the person doesn't die right away, then law looked upon the injuries differently
      - The master's penalty would only be loss of the slave
      - The presumption is that the master hadn't intend to kill his slave, or else he would have died right away
      - So the master's mistake is paid for in the loss of his servant
  - Remember, slaves became property of the master because they had entered into the arrangement voluntarily
    - Also, remember that Jesus Himself used the picture of slave to explain our relationship to Christ

[Luke 12:42](#) And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?"

[Luke 12:43](#) "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

[Luke 12:44](#) "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

[Luke 12:45](#) "But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk;

[Luke 12:46](#) the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

[Luke 12:47](#) “And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes,

[Luke 12:48](#) but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

- Before we judge God’s word for its willingness to accommodate slavery in scripture, consider that He allowed the institution so that we might have an accurate picture of our relationship with Him
  - Without the institution of slavery, we would struggle to understand how bound we are to Christ
  - And how we are obligated to obey Him
  - And of what the penalties will be for disobedience
- In v.22 the law addresses the rights of a mother who is injured and forced to give birth prematurely
  - If the baby survives, the woman is compensated for the injury and the premature delivery
    - If the child is injured or dies, then a proportion punishment follows
      - If the child dies, the person is to die as well
      - If the child was injured, then the person was to lose use of a similar function in the body
    - The exact punishment was decided by the husband, but it must be approved by a judge
      - In all cases, a man guilty of injuring someone could avoid the physical punishment if they paid a ransom as explained in v.30
      - But either way, they lost something of value for taking something of value from the other
  - These rules on harm to unborn children give rise to a couple of interesting observations
    - First, an unborn baby has standing apart from his mother

- The child is not considered an extensions of the woman's body
  - The child is a separate life protected under law
  - This counters arguments by abortion proponents that the unborn child is merely part of the woman's body until birth
- Secondly, if the baby is not delivered alive, the person causing the injury is guilty of murder
- The principle of proportion is summed up as "an eye for an eye"
  - This principle in the Law was intended to limit retribution, not encourage it
    - When someone is wronged, the wronged party should expect no more compensation than was lost in the injury
    - Masters how harm slaves lose their slave, for he is set free
    - Owners whose animals harm another person, lose their animal
      - And notice they don't get to enjoy the meat either
    - And if the owner knows the animal is dangerous and does nothing, then when it kills again the owner is guilty of murder and must pay a price
      - Either he dies himself
      - Or he pays a ransom as demanded
  - When negligence takes someone's property, you compensate them and you keep the property you damaged
    - But the compensation should not exceed what was lost
  - Our modern court system has lost this sense of proportion
    - We invented forms of loss like "pain and suffering" that the Law of God never recognizes
    - Life is full of pain and suffering, but demanding payment of a ransom doesn't erase the pain
    - Only if there was true loss was a payment required