

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Two

Read **Exodus 22:1-6** – Theft and Damages

**v.1** “IF A MAN SHALL STEAL AN OX, OR A SHEEP, AND KILL IT, OR SELL IT; HE SHALL RESTORE FIVE OXEN FOR AN OX, AND FOUR SHEEP FOR A SHEEP.”

Under the Mosaic Covenant theft was forbidden:

**Exodus 20:15** “THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.”

But knowing the nature of man to rebel against, or just plain ignore God’s laws when it seems convenient to him; God provides for punishment of the thief. First of all if the thief kills or sells the animal then, depending on its value, he is commanded to pay the owner in kind times four or five.

**v.2** “IF A THIEF BE FOUND BREAKING UP, AND BE SMITTEN THAT HE DIE, *there shall* NO BLOOD *be shed* FOR HIM.”

In chapter 21 we saw that under the Mosaic Law if a man killed another man then he should die himself:

**Exodus 21:12** “HE THAT SMITETH A MAN, SO THAT HE DIE, SHALL BE SURELY PUT TO DEATH.”

But that did not apply if the man who was killed had broken into your house. God allowed man to protect his house, family and possessions to the point of killing someone. God made this conditional; only if the crime was committed at night.

**v.3** “IF THE SUN BE RISEN UPON HIM, *there shall be* BLOOD *shed* FOR HIM; *for* HE SHOULD MAKE FULL RESTITUTION; IF HE HAVE NOTHING, THEN HE SHALL BE SOLD FOR HIS THEFT.”

So if the sun had risen and the crime was housebreaking instead of burglary the thief was not to be killed. If he was killed then the death penalty accorded for murder was applied. Under this circumstance the thief would be charged with making full restitution. In Proverbs we are given an amount:

**Proverbs 6:31** “BUT *if* HE BE FOUND, HE SHALL RESTORE SEVENFOLD; HE SHALL GIVE ALL THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS HOUSE.”

And if he didn’t have anything he could be sold into slavery in order to make payment to the householder. Restitution is the purest form of repentance. What example do we have in the New Testament of a man who practiced the commandment of God willingly?

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**Luke 19:8** “AND ZACCHAEUS STOOD, AND SAID UNTO THE LORD: BEHOLD, LORD, THE HALF OF MY GOODS I GIVE TO THE POOR; AND IF I HAVE TAKEN ANY THING FROM ANY MAN BY FALSE ACCUSATION, I RESTORE *him* FOURFOLD.”

**v.4** “IF THE THEFT IS CERTAINLY FOUND ALIVE IN HIS HAND, WHETHER IT IS AN OX OR DONKEY OR SHEEP, HE SHALL RESTORE DOUBLE. (NKJV)”

If the thief was caught and the goods or animals recovered then he was commanded to “RESTORE DOUBLE” to the owner or householder.

**v.5** “IF A MAN SHALL CAUSE A FIELD OR VINEYARD TO BE EATEN, AND SHALL PUT IN HIS BEAST, AND SHALL FEED IN ANOTHER MAN'S FIELD; OF THE BEST OF HIS OWN FIELD, AND OF THE BEST OF HIS OWN VINEYARD, SHALL HE MAKE RESTITUTION.”

If a man allowed his animals to enter a neighbor's field or vineyard and devour or destroy his crop he was to make restitution from the best of his own fields or vineyards.

**v.6** “IF FIRE BREAK OUT, AND CATCH IN THORNS, SO THAT THE STACKS OF CORN, OR THE STANDING CORN, OR THE FIELD, BE CONSUMED *therewith*; HE THAT KINDLED THE FIRE SHALL SURELY MAKE RESTITUTION.”

Likewise if he started a fire or if a fire broke out and got into his neighbor's fields or stacks of grain waiting to be threshed he had to make restitution. As is common in some areas today, it was a practice to burn off the fields after harvest. Without turning plows that were invented centuries later this was one way to remove the stubble from the field without a lot of labor.

Read **Exodus 22:7-13** – Trusts and Trespass

**v.7** “IF A MAN SHALL DELIVER UNTO HIS NEIGHBOUR MONEY OR STUFF TO KEEP, AND IT BE STOLEN OUT OF THE MAN'S HOUSE; IF THE THIEF BE FOUND, LET HIM PAY DOUBLE.”

The thief was obligated for double restitution even if what he stole did not belong to the householder that had possession when he stole it.

**v.8** “IF THE THIEF BE NOT FOUND, THEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE SHALL BE BROUGHT UNTO THE JUDGES, *to see* WHETHER HE HAVE PUT HIS HAND UNTO HIS NEIGHBOUR'S GOODS.”

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Under circumstances where a thief could not be found or if there was question regarding whether someone actually stole the goods or possessions that were placed in trust, the "MASTER OF THE HOUSE" was to be brought before the judges. Who were the judges of Israel?

At the time of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai they were men that Moses had appointed. Jethro told him:

**Exodus 18:21** "MOREOVER THOU SHALT PROVIDE OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE ABLE MEN, SUCH AS FEAR GOD, MEN OF TRUTH, HATING COVETOUSNESS; AND PLACE *such* OVER THEM, *to be* RULERS OF THOUSANDS, and RULERS OF HUNDREDS, RULERS OF FIFTIES, AND RULERS OF TENS:"

Then when the Israelites came into the land of Canaan and were fully established they were judged by the priests and the Levites with the ultimate level of judgment being the Judge that God raised up over the people.

**Deuteronomy 17:8-9** "IF THERE ARISE A MATTER TOO HARD FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT, BETWEEN BLOOD AND BLOOD, BETWEEN PLEA AND PLEA, AND BETWEEN STROKE AND STROKE, *being* MATTERS OF CONTROVERSY WITHIN THY GATES: THEN SHALT THOU ARISE, AND GET THEE UP INTO THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE; AND THOU SHALT COME UNTO THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES, AND UNTO THE JUDGE THAT SHALL BE IN THOSE DAYS, AND ENQUIRE; AND THEY SHALL SHEW THEE THE SENTENCE OF JUDGMENT:"

**v.9** "FOR ANY KIND OF TRESPASS, *whether it concerns* 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 CONDEMN SHALL PAY DOUBLE TO HIS NEIGHBOR.(NKJV)"

The laws of trespass followed the same pattern. If someone was taken to judgment in a dispute of ownership, then the party that the judges determined to be in the right was to receive double restitution.

**v.10-11** "IF A MAN DELIVERS TO HIS NEIGHBOR A DONKEY, AN OX, A SHEEP, OR ANY ANIMAL TO KEEP, AND IT DIES, IS HURT, OR DRIVEN AWAY, NO ONE SEEING *it, then* AN OATH OF THE **LORD** SHALL BE BETWEEN THEM BOTH, THAT HE HAS NOT PUT HIS HAND INTO HIS NEIGHBOR'S GOODS; AND THE OWNER OF IT SHALL ACCEPT *that*, AND HE SHALL NOT MAKE *it* GOOD."

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And we see here the fairness of God's commandments. If one man delivers to another an animal to keep, whether by hire or for convenience, and the animal dies, wanders off or gets hurt. The master of the house is not required to make restitution for his neighbor's loss. Then there comes an exception to that general rule in the next verse.

**v.12-13** "AND IF IT BE STOLEN FROM HIM, HE SHALL MAKE RESTITUTION UNTO THE OWNER THEREOF. IF IT BE TORN IN PIECES, THEN LET HIM BRING IT FOR WITNESS, AND HE SHALL NOT MAKE GOOD THAT WHICH WAS TORN."

If the animal is stolen the man must make restitution but if it is killed by a wild animal all the man must do is to bring proof to the judge and again he is not required to make restitution. Theft is the only reason that he would be required to make restitution.

Read **Exodus 22:14-31** – Various Laws and Commandments

**v.14** "AND IF A MAN BORROW *ought* OF HIS NEIGHBOUR, AND IT BE HURT, OR DIE, THE OWNER THEREOF *being* NOT WITH IT, HE SHALL SURELY MAKE IT GOOD."

Here we see God making a distinction due to relationships. If a neighbor places something with someone for safe keeping and something happens to it, other than theft, then there is no responsibility for restitution. However, if you the man goes and borrows something from that neighbor and something happens to it then restitution is required.

**v.15** "BUT IF THE OWNER THEREOF BE WITH IT, HE SHALL NOT MAKE IT GOOD: IF IT BE AN HIRED THING, IT CAME FOR HIS HIRE."

A different situation – if the owner is hired and comes with an animal to use in his service and something happens to it then there is no requirement for restitution. It never left the control of its owner.

**v.16** "AND IF A MAN ENTICE A MAID THAT IS NOT BETROTHED, AND LIE WITH HER, HE SHALL SURELY ENDOW HER TO BE HIS WIFE."

Up home we called those "shotgun weddings" but I never realized that under the Mosaic Covenant they were sanctioned by God. That doesn't mean that God sanctioned the sin:

**Ephesians 5:3** "BUT FORNICATION, AND ALL UNCLEanness, OR COVETOUSNESS, LET IT NOT BE ONCE NAMED AMONG YOU, AS BECOMETH SAINTS."

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God simply provides a lawful remedy for the situation that the sin has created.

**v.17** “IF HER FATHER UTTERLY REFUSE TO GIVE HER UNTO HIM, HE SHALL PAY MONEY ACCORDING TO THE DOWRY OF VIRGINS.”

If the father refused to allow his daughter to marry then the one who defiled her was to provide for her dowry that was given under the customs of that day.

**v.18** “THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE.”

A simple and straightforward commandment, if someone practiced witchcraft they were to die. This is why that the woman with the “FAMILIAR SPIRIT” was so frightened when Saul told her to bring up Samuel in **I Samuel 28**.

Were there witches in Old Testament times? There are people who claim to practice witchcraft today. They have no special powers such as those that were given devils and demons during the time of Christ; they have long ceased to exist.

Studying from *Vines* the two words in the Hebrew that are translated witch are *mecashefat* which means “commerce with God” and *cashaph* which means “to uncover, to remove a veil, to manifest, reveal, make bare or naked.” So these were people who claimed or alleged to be able, through their relationship with God to foretell, reveal or manifest knowledge of some kind. There were people who practiced “curious arts”. We remember the magicians of Egypt who were able to duplicate some of the signs that God had given Moses. We also find in scripture this record of Manesseh, son of Hezekiah and king of Judah:

**II Chronicles 33:6** “AND HE CAUSED HIS CHILDREN TO PASS THROUGH THE FIRE IN THE VALLEY OF THE SON OF HINNOM: ALSO HE OBSERVED TIMES, AND USED ENCHANTMENTS, AND USED WITCHCRAFT, AND DEALT WITH A FAMILIAR SPIRIT, AND WITH WIZARDS: HE WROUGHT MUCH EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE **LORD**, TO PROVOKE HIM TO ANGER.”

These people are quite likely to be those of whom Jeremiah spake, for we know that they are not of God:

**Jeremiah 14:14** “THEN THE **LORD** SAID UNTO ME, THE PROPHETS PROPHECY LIES IN MY NAME: I SENT THEM NOT, NEITHER HAVE I COMMANDED THEM, NEITHER SPAKE UNTO THEM: THEY PROPHESEY UNTO YOU A FALSE VISION AND DIVINATION, AND A THING OF NOUGHT, AND THE DECEIT OF THEIR HEART.”

We even have an example in the New Testament:

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**Acts 8:9-11** “BUT THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN, CALLED SIMON, WHICH BEFORETIME IN THE SAME CITY USED SORCERY, AND BEWITCHED THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA, GIVING OUT THAT HIMSELF WAS SOME GREAT ONE: TO WHOM THEY ALL GAVE HEED, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST, SAYING, THIS MAN IS THE GREAT POWER OF GOD. AND TO HIM THEY HAD REGARD, BECAUSE THAT OF LONG TIME HE HAD BEWITCHED THEM WITH SORCERIES.”

So these people were contrary to God and enemies of God’s people enticing them, overcoming them with their guile and causing them to abandon God. God commanded their destruction, their death, so it’s no wonder that the witch of Endor was frightened when Samuel actually answered her call, came forth from the grave and also that she realized that the person standing before her was King Saul.

**I Samuel 28:12** “AND WHEN THE WOMAN SAW SAMUEL, SHE CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE: AND THE WOMAN SPAKE TO SAUL, SAYING, WHY HAST THOU DECEIVED ME? FOR THOU *art* SAUL.”

**v.19** “WHOSOEVER LIETH WITH A BEAST SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH.”

Bestiality was punishable by death.

**v.20** “HE THAT SACRIFICETH UNTO ANY GOD, SAVE UNTO THE **LORD** ONLY, HE SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED.”

A person who worship another god was to be “UTTERLY DESTROYED”. This commandment goes back to one of the ten that we studied in chapter 20.

**Exodus 20:5** “THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM: FOR I THE **LORD** THY GOD *am* A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH *generation* OF THEM THAT HATE ME;”

**v.21** “THOU SHALT NEITHER VEX A STRANGER, NOR OPPRESS HIM: FOR YE WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

In the place of “VEX” the NKJV uses the word “MISTREAT”. They were not to treat strangers like they were treated in Egypt. And as we reflect on this commandment we can remember that it was not God’s plan for any of the Canaanite peoples to be made slaves or to be oppressed but rather to be removed.

**v.22** “YOU SHALL NOT AFFLICT ANY WIDOW OR FATHERLESS CHILD.”

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Under the Law of Christ the admonition is even stronger:

**James 1:27** "PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD AND THE FATHER IS THIS, TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS *and* WIDOWS IN THEIR AFFLICTION, AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD."

The word visit means more than just going by, saying hello and sitting for a while. It means to share and help relieve their affliction. (*Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)

**v.23** "IF THOU AFFLICT THEM IN ANY WISE, AND THEY CRY AT ALL UNTO ME, I WILL SURELY HEAR THEIR CRY;"

God has a special place in his heart for those in these circumstances. He makes assurance that he will hear their cry and attend to their needs. And then he gives a warning.

**v.24** "AND MY WRATH SHALL WAX HOT, AND I WILL KILL YOU WITH THE SWORD; AND YOUR WIVES SHALL BE WIDOWS, AND YOUR CHILDREN FATHERLESS."

In the Old Testament God promises to destroy those who would mistreat an orphan or widow and make widows of their wives and orphans of their children. In the New Testament we are warned about incurring the wrath of God:

**Hebrews 10:31** "*It is* A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD."

**v.25** "IF THOU LEND MONEY TO *any of* MY PEOPLE *that is* POOR BY THEE, THOU SHALT NOT BE TO HIM AS AN USURER, NEITHER SHALT THOU LAY UPON HIM USURY."

What is usury? Is it simply the lending of money for interest or does it indicate something beyond that kind of activity? Usury is lending money and charging more than the law or fairness in business would allow. When I hear the word I immediately think of the people who make payday loans. In the wisdom of God it is described this way:

**Proverbs 28:8** "HE THAT BY USURY AND UNJUST GAIN INCREASETH HIS SUBSTANCE, HE SHALL GATHER IT FOR HIM THAT WILL PITY THE POOR."

Here we also have the promise that one who get gains by usury will have his substance taken away for him by someone who will "PITY THE POOR".

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**v.26** "IF THOU AT ALL TAKE THY NEIGHBOUR'S RAIMENT TO PLEDGE, THOU SHALT DELIVER IT UNTO HIM BY THAT THE SUN GOETH DOWN:"

We might think it strange for someone to pledge their garment for a debt but they did and God has given instructions that the one to which it was pledged that he is not to keep it overnight.

**v.27** "FOR THAT *is* HIS COVERING ONLY, IT IS HIS RAIMENT FOR HIS SKIN: WHEREIN SHALL HE SLEEP? AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, WHEN HE CRIETH UNTO ME, THAT I WILL HEAR; FOR I *am* GRACIOUS."

Then God gives the reason. This garment is also the one that he uses as a coverlet when he sleeps. So if the holder keeps it overnight he's leaving the one who gave it in collateral without a cover to sleep under during the night. In our vernacular, leaving him "out in the cold."

**v.28** "THOU SHALT NOT REVILE THE GODS, NOR CURSE THE RULER OF THY PEOPLE."

This verse has a translation problem in the KJV that is corrected in the NKJV. It should read "THOU SHALT NOT REVILE GOD" for the word translated gods or God is Elohim in the original language, the name of Jehovah, God of heaven.

God commands that neither are we to revile or curse the ruler or rulers under which we live. Sometimes that's not easy to do if that ruler doesn't deserve the honor of his office. Even so:

**Romans 13:1** "LET EVERY SOUL BE SUBJECT UNTO THE HIGHER POWERS. FOR THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD: THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD."

**v.29** "THOU SHALT NOT DELAY *to offer* THE FIRST OF THY RIPE FRUITS, AND OF THY LIQUORS: THE FIRSTBORN OF THY SONS SHALT THOU GIVE UNTO ME."

The New King James reads "THE FIRST OF YOUR RIPE PRODUCE AND YOUR JUICES", God is not talking about liquor as we know it today. The commandment was to also dedicate the first-born son to God. We have encountered this before, who remembers?

**Exodus 13:2** "SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN, WHATSOEVER OPENETH THE WOMB AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, BOTH OF MAN AND OF BEAST: IT IS MINE."



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**v.30** “LIKEWISE SHALT THOU DO WITH THINE OXEN, AND WITH THY SHEEP: SEVEN DAYS IT SHALL BE WITH HIS DAM; ON THE EIGHTH DAY THOU SHALT GIVE IT ME.”

As is noted in **Exodus 13:2**, the giving of the first born to God applied to their animals as well as their sons. Also in chapter 13 instructions are given regarding what to do if the animal was an unclean animal that would not be acceptable for an offering. There was a substitution process that they were to follow.

**v.31** “AND YE SHALL BE HOLY MEN UNTO ME: NEITHER SHALL YE EAT ANY FLESH *that is* TORN OF BEASTS IN THE FIELD; YE SHALL CAST IT TO THE DOGS.”

If wild beasts or dogs would kill one of the animals in the field, sheep, calf, cow or whatever that was lawful to eat for food; it could not be used. They were to maintain the status of “HOLY MEN”; men consecrated to God, who worshiped and served God as he commanded; lived lives above reproach, either by the world or by God. They were not to act like scavengers.