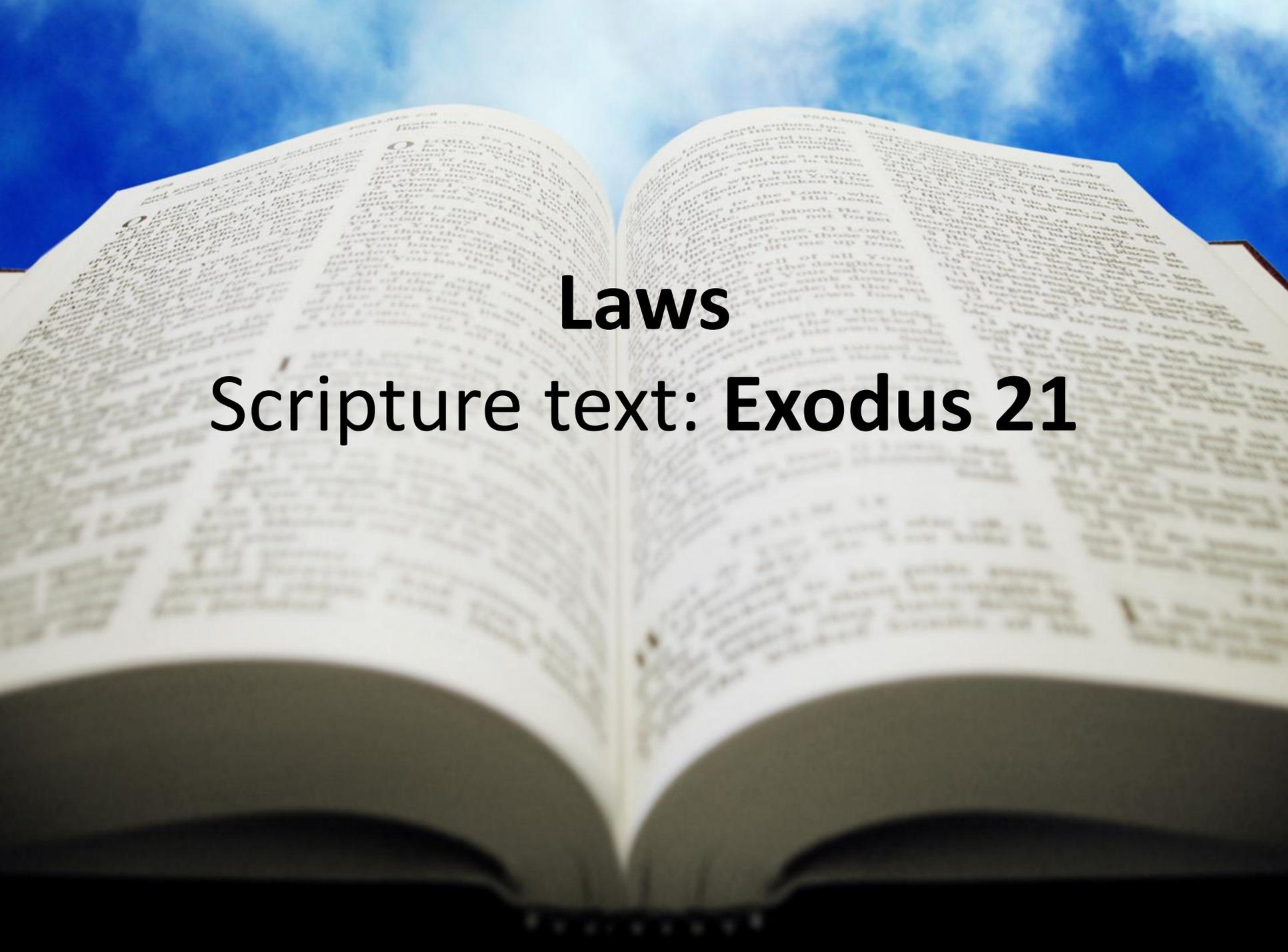


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
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Laws

Scripture text: **Exodus 21**

Having given Israel the Law of God in the **Ten Commandments**, Moses then explained and applied that Law to various aspects of human life.

Wherever there is law, there must be interpretation and application; otherwise the law is impractical and not at all helpful. In the beginning, it was the priests who taught and applied the Law in Israel; but in later years, it was the scribes and rabbis who became the professional teachers of the Law.

Unfortunately, their interpretations became as authoritative as the original Law, and it was this error that Jesus exposed through His teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7). See also Mark 7:1–23 for further insight.

Mark 7:1-2 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

Mark 7:3-7 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**'"

Mark 7:8-13 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban"' (that is, given to God)-- then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Mark 7:14-19 And he called the people to him again and said to them, "**Hear me, all of you, and understand:** There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." [*If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.*] And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "**Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?**" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

Mark 7:20-23 And he said, "**What comes out of a person is what defiles him.** For from within, **out of the heart of man**, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. **All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.**"

So, is it the actual Commandment of God or the interpretation that has the authority?

Was this the fault of the Scribes and Pharisees?

1. Caring for Servants (21:1–11)

The Jews were allowed to buy and sell servants, but **they were forbidden to treat them as slaves.**

Sometimes people had to sell themselves into service because of their poverty (Lev. 25:39; Deut. 15:12), but their service was limited to only six years. **Then they had to be freed.**

Leviticus 25:39-40 "If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, **you shall not make him serve as a slave:** he shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee.

Deuteronomy 15:11-15 For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.' "**If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.** And when you let him go free from you, **you shall not let him go empty-handed**. You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. **As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you;** therefore I command you this today.

If a servant wanted to remain with the master, the servant was marked in the ear and would remain in the household for life.

Deuteronomy 15:16-17 But if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he is well-off with you, then **you shall take an awl, and put it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your slave forever.** And to your female slave you shall do the same.

Psalms 40:6 In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Verses 7–11. Female slaves were treated differently. Many times female slaves were concubines or secondary wives (cf. Gen. 16:3; 22:24; 30:3, 9; 36:12; Jud. 8:31; 9:18).

Genesis 30:3 Then she said, "**Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.**"

Genesis 30:9 When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, **she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.**

Judges 8:30-31 Now Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, for he had **many wives**. And his **concubine** who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech.

Judges 9:17-18 for my father fought for you and risked his life and delivered you from the hand of Midian, and you have risen up against my father's house this day and have killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and have made Abimelech, the **son of his female servant**, king over the leaders of Shechem, because he is your relative--

Some Hebrew fathers thought it more advantageous for their daughters to become concubines of well-to-do neighbors than to become the wives of men in their own social class. If a daughter who became a servant was not pleasing to her master she was to be redeemed by a near kinsman (cf. Lev. 25:47–54) but **never sold to foreigners** (Ex. 21:8); she could also redeem herself.

Exodus 21:8 If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. **He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her.**

Leviticus 25:50-54 He shall calculate with his buyer from the year when he sold himself to him until the year of jubilee, and the price of his sale shall vary with the number of years. The time he was with his owner shall be rated as the time of a hired servant. If there are still many years left, he shall pay proportionately for his redemption some of his sale price. If there remain but a few years until the year of jubilee, he shall calculate and pay for his redemption in proportion to his years of service. He shall treat him as a servant hired year by year. He shall not rule ruthlessly over him in your sight. And if he is not redeemed by these means, **then he and his children with him shall be released in the year of jubilee.**

If she married her master's son she was to be given family status (v. 9). If the master married someone else he was required to provide his servant with three essentials: food, clothing, and shelter (marital rights probably means living quarters, not sexual privilege).

Exodus 21:8-9 If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her. **If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter.**

2. Compensating Personal Injuries (21:12–36)

These regulations were given to assure fairness in compensating people for injuries. “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (v. 24) is not a “law of the jungle” but **an expression of fair payment for injuries received**, so that the judges would not demand more or less than what was right. It is the basis for law today, although it is not always justly applied. Our Lord’s words in Matt. 5:38–42 have to do with private revenge rather than public disobedience to the Law.

Matthew 5:38-42 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But **I say to you**, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. **Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.**

Exodus 21:12-17 "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die. "Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death. "Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death. "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

Exodus 21:20-25 "When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, **he shall be avenged**. But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money. "When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But **if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe**.

There were several **capital crimes** in Israel, among them: **murder** (vv. 12–15), **kidnapping** (v. 16), **cursing one's parents** (v. 17), **causing the death of a pregnant woman and/or her fetus** (vv. 22–23), **trafficking in demonism** (22:18), and **practicing bestiality** (22:19).

The basis for **capital punishment** is **God's covenant with Noah** (Gen. 9:1–6) and the fact that man is created in the image of God. It is God who gives life and **only He has the right to take it away or authorize it to be taken** (Rom. 13).

Exodus 21:12-15 "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die. **"Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death.**

2 Samuel 12:13-14 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die."

Deuteronomy 19:11-13 "But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may be well with you.

Leviticus 24:17 "Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death.

Genesis 9:1-6 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. **But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning:** from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. **"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.**

Romans 13:1-5 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For **rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.** Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? **Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good.** But **if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.** **For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.** Therefore one must be in subjection, **not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.**

God makes a distinction between deliberate murder and accidental death or manslaughter.

Exodus 21:12-13 *"Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee.*

The cities of refuge were provided for the protection of the person who accidentally killed someone (Num. 35:6ff). There were no police in that day, and a slain person's family would feel obligated to avenge the death of their loved one. Therefore **it was necessary to protect the innocent until the case could be investigated by the elders.**

Numbers 35:6-7 "The cities that you give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, where you shall permit the manslayer to flee, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. All the cities that you give to the Levites shall be forty-eight, with their pasturelands.

Joshua 21:13 And to the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasturelands, Libnah with its pasturelands,

Note that God held the owner of an animal responsible for what it did to others (vv. 28–36), if that owner knew already that the animal was dangerous. The law made sure that nobody could take advantage of such situations and profit from them.

Verses 22–23 are basic to the pro-life position on abortion, for they indicate that the aborting of a fetus was equivalent to the murdering of the child. The guilty party was punished as a murderer (“life for life”) if the mother or the unborn child, or both, died. See also Ps. 139:13–16.

Exodus 21:15-17 "Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death. "**Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.** "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.

Genesis 40:15 For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

Deuteronomy 24:7 "If a man is found stealing one of his brothers of the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Revelation 18:9-13 And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

Exodus 21:22-25 "When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Psalm 139:13-16 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, **when I was being made in secret**, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

1 Samuel 15:31-35 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD. Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." And Samuel said, "**As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.**" And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Exodus 21:28-32 "When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall not be liable. But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom is imposed on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is imposed on him. If it gores a man's son or daughter, he shall be dealt with according to this same rule. If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and **the ox shall be stoned.**

Genesis 9:5-6 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: **from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

Leviticus 20:15-16 If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.