

Summit Woods Baptist Church
Sermon Study Equipping Class

Exodus 21

Remember to begin your study early in the week so that you have time to really think (and keep thinking) about the passage without being rushed.

❖ Day 1

Read Exodus 21

For these lessons, the sermon text is provided in a format that visually helps display the structure of the paragraph or section of text. Generally, the main indicative clauses remain to the left, and the other clauses are either directly underneath when they have equal priority to what comes before or are tabbed to the right when the clause supports, develops, or draws a conclusion from a neighboring clause.

1 “Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them:

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

12 “He who strikes 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.

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.

15 “He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

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

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

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- 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.
- 20 "If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand,
he shall be punished.
- 21 If, however, he survives a day or two,
no vengeance shall be taken; for he is his property.
- 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.
- 23 But if there is any further injury,
then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 30 If a ransom is demanded of him,
then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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1. Read again through Exodus 21 and divide it into major sections. Where did you place your divides? Justify your divisions from the text.
2. Consider the context of Exodus 21. What just happened in chapter 20? Compare and contrast Exodus 20:1 with Exodus 21:1
3. What is the relationship between the “10 words” (the 10 commandments from chapter 20) and this list of ordinances that begins in chapter 21?
4. Compare the first set of ordinances in chapter 21 with Exodus 20:2. How are they related?
5. How was Israel treated as slaves? See Exodus 1:8-16,22; 2:11,23.
6. How does God’s Redeeming work to free Israel from slavery serve as a backdrop to the first set of commands about slavery?

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7. Construct a description of the kind of slavery described in Exodus 21:1-11, 16,20-21. Consider also Deuteronomy 15:12-15 in your description.

8. Contrast this with Israel's slavery in Egypt. How are they different? (Be careful of reading ideas into the text. Only write down descriptions based on what is explicitly in the passage).

9. Does this text ever defend the practice of slavery? Explain.

❖ Day 2

Read Exodus 21 again.

10. How many distinct laws are there in verses 12-17? What do all the laws from verse 12-17 have in common? Note the repeated phrase.

11. What does Deuteronomy 17:6-7 add to your understanding of how the justice of these laws are administered.

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12. Which commandment from Exodus 20 is associated with the first of the laws in this section (vs 12)? List the reference. What is the relationships between the two?

13. What is the difference between the command in verse 12 and the command in verse 13?

14. Read Numbers 35:6-15 and Deuteronomy 19:1-13. How do these inform the meaning of Exodus 21:13?

15. Read Exodus 21:16. How do Deuteronomy 24:7, 1 Timothy 1:10, and Genesis 37:28 add clarity to the meaning of Exodus 21:16?

16. Which commandment from Exodus 20 is related to Exodus 21:17. List the reference.

❖ Day 3

Read 21 again.

17. What do verses 18-27 have in common in Exodus 21?

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18. How does Exodus 21:22 speak to the value of human? How do verses 26-27 speak to the value of every human life?

19. What do verses 28 through 36 have in common? Explain.

20. Considering all these laws in Exodus 21, how does the intent of the one who is responsible for damage impact the justice of the crime? Explain especially in light of verse 29.

21. How does Exodus 21:32 add understanding to Matthew 26:15?

22. In general, how does this chapter speak to how God honors human dignity? How does this chapter speak to the justice of God?

In preparation for Sunday, pray trusting in the justice of God. Pray for clarity where it is lacking through the preaching of the Word. Pray for your heart to value all those who bear the image of God.