

**Friday, July 29, 2022 ◻ Read Exodus 21:12–27**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What crime does v12 address? What penalty does it require? What distinction does v13 make? Where can this accidental killer go? But for murder, what place isn't even safe (v14)? For what does v15 prescribe the death penalty? For what does v16 prescribe the death penalty? For what does v17 prescribe the death penalty? What penalty and restitution must be made if death does not result from an attack (v18–19)? Who is punished similarly, even if there was cause (v20)? What does v21 imply that the servant was refusing to be/do? What further protections are servants given, even if there was cause for their being struck (v26–27)? For what would men be punished, even if there was no other harm at all (v22)? What two parties conclude the amount of the punishment? To what extent are they punished for any harm to the child (v23–25)?*

**What will God's new society be like?** Exodus 21:12–27 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these sixteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Israelites were to apply God's moral law by having a civil law that guarded and valued His image in human life and His honor in established authorities.**

**God values His own image in human life.** We already knew the commandment (cf. 20:13) and even the penalty (cf. Gen 9:6) that are in force in all societies: murderers must be executed (v12). Accidental killing (v13) is different because it isn't an assault on God's image. But murder being an attack upon God, even the place of mercy—God's altar—is not safe for the murderer (v14). And if his victim does not die, he is kept alive to work and pay for whatever harm has come, as long as that harm continues (v18–20).

This valuing of God's image holds true, even in the case of servants. v16 again clarifies (cf. our previous devotional in vv1–11) that slavery in Israel was different than the power-based manstealing by which slavery has existed throughout the history of fallen man. Those who tried to have this sort of slavery were to be executed. But when a man sold himself into slavery to pay a debt, he was agreeing to act as property (v21), and even to be physically corrected when he did not. v21 does not teach that a man who wishes to own an object for beating can purchase a man for that purpose, but rather implies that the struck servant was not operating according to the agreement. Even so, for a slave who deserved punishment, the master who was severe enough that the slave lost an eye or tooth would lose his slave (v26–27). And the master would forfeit his own life, if he was severe enough that the slave lost his life.

This valuing of God's image holds true, *especially* in the case of the pregnant and preborn. The woman and child in v22 are bystanders, so their harm would have fallen into the case of v13. But God's special regard for them requires complete vengeance, even and especially for the child in the womb (v23–25). And when premature birth results, there doesn't even have to have been other harm. The husband/father is given a blank check, restrained only by the judges, to demand whatever he wants in restitution! In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the so-called "civilized" world has so set itself against God in its treatment of the pregnant and preborn as to show itself most uncivilized and condemn itself to death.

**God values His own honor in His established authorities.** Sprinkled into these cases of capital crimes are the one who strikes his father or his mother (v15) and even who "merely" curses his father or his mother (v17). As we considered in the fifth commandment (cf. 20:12), what is at stake here is not only submission and obedience, but honor from the heart. By executing such children, God not only reminds all that it is His authority that is behind all legitimate authority, but He protects the society of His people from being slowly infected and destroyed from within by the rebellious.

How should nations punish murder? For whose lives should they have a special regard? Whose authority should a nation acknowledge behind all authorities? What should the church do with children who attack or curse their parents (hint: not execution, since it doesn't have the sword)?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for how little we have valued Your image in men and Your honor in authority. Conform our hearts to Yours, and give us nations and churches whose laws and actions reflect the same, we ask, through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP184 "Adoration and Submission" or TPH164 "God Himself Is with Us"**

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Exodus chapter 21 verses 12 through 27. These are God's words. He who strikes a man, so that he dies, I'll surely be put to death. However, if you did not lie in weight to put God delivered him into his hand, Then I will appoint you a place where he may flee.

But if a man acts as a premeditation against his neighbor to kill him by treachery You sell, take him from my altar, that he may die and he who strikes, his father or his mother. So I'll surely be put to death, he who kidnaps a man and sells him.

Or if he has found in his hand shall surely be put to death and he who curses his father or his mother. So surely be put to that on If men can tend with each other and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die but it's confined to his bed.

If he arises again and walks outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. It's only pay for the loss of his time and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed. And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished notwithstanding.

If you remains alive a day or two, it's not be punished for his property have been fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth from poorly yet. No harm follows. He shall surely be put a punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him and he shall pay as the judges determine.

But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life. I for I tooth for tooth hand, for hand foot, for foot burn for burn, wound for wound. Stripe for stripe. If a man strikes, the eye of his male or female servant and destroys it, it's a let him go free for the sake of his eye.

And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, and she'll let him go free for the sake of his tooth. So far the reading of gods inspired and an intert.

It's passage continues what began at the beginning of the chapter, the application of the moral law in the life of Israel, as a state, as a civil state. When we say nation in this context, we don't mean ethnicity. We mean as a society and in particular, it addresses, the issue of murder and includes also fifth commandment issues.

So we have six commandment and fifth commandment. Now, it is playing. That murder is intending to kill a neighbor. And this includes when to contend with one another, you look at verse 18, even if the guy doesn't die. But remains bedridden verse. 19 implies that the one who quote unquote won the fight.

Loses his life. Okay? That also should put rest any romanticized. Notions of the evil thing, called dueling way of solving disputes and the 18th and 19th centuries. For some reason, There are some 20 late 20th and early 21st century fools. Who think anything? 18th and 19th century. Must have been wholesome and good and wise but if they knew the history of those times, they would know that we reformed Presbyterians didn't start becoming weird.

In the 20th century. We've been weird ever since Abel who got killed by Kane because Cain wanted his contemporary worship to be recognized before God and are weirdness has descended ever since, but it's a weirdness of a lying aligning with God.

So Presbyterians were against dueling. Why were they against dueling? Well, because Exodus teaches that dueling is murder and God values, his own image in human life. In fact, the penalty for murder being death. That's not new here in the statutes of Israel That was Instituted for all societies everywhere in Genesis chapter 9 in the Lord said specifically.

It was because man is made in the image of God. It was two guys fight with one. Another one, you know, they both risk having to pay for the other guy. I don't know what happens if they both made each other and neither, you know, they both lose hands and eyes or whatever.

I'm not, neither of them can be healed. How about you, run the rest? If you permanently injure the guy and he's not able to work a good enough job because he's lower level. Now that you have to fill in the gaps for him financially, for the rest of your life and hopefully you end up having a good relationship and you're sorry and so forth.

And you end up blessing the day that brought you into such a relationship but that kind of thing can only happen. We could only expect that kind of thing from their generate people. Anyway, God, obviously he values his own image in human life. Two special cases here One, is it holds true?

Even in the case of servants When it says for, he is his property in verse 21, it is not saying that a man can buy a servant to have as property so that he can beat him whenever he wants. It's implying that the servant deserved the correction that the servant was refusing to function as property and that the corrections are commensurate with with whatever level of rebellion and as it gets worse and worse, corrections become more and more severe.

There is expectation that the the servant who you remember could only be your servant for six years from the previous passage is being treated in keeping with the sixth commandment. And if the the master kills him, he actually gets the death penalty for it. And if the master injures him in some permanent way, disables him in some permanent way than the master gets disabled permanently.

So, quite obviously not, you know, if you read for, he is his property at the end of verse 21 as saying, Well, he owns him completely so he can do whatever he wants with him. Then you're just reading this completely out of context and you deserve to be given over to your despising of God and to your despising of his word.

We all deserve that, We must guard our hearts and minds, not to read judgmentally, the law of God, feel free to read judgmentally, not judgmentally. But feel free to recognize the flaws. In the people of God, They're very flawed and the Lord points it out all the time, but there are no flaws in the law of God.

And so we must be very careful and be willing to be corrected either in our understanding or in our morality. So it holds true even in the case of servants that holds to especially in the case of the pregnant and the preborn the men in verse 22 hurt, a bystander.

And if she, if she gives birth pre-term, if he goes birth ahead of the expected time and nothing bad. Other than that, even happens to the baby, the the guys who are fighting still, I have to pay pretty much whatever the father of the child, the husband of the wife requires, The only limit is that the judges of the town have to sign off on it.

But with this statute written by God, they're probably going to be signing off on a lot. This is one of the reasons why in Christian culture when a pregnant mom walks into the room you know everyone gives special consideration for her and it was extended in different times in Christian culture where a lady or a child Not children so much.

But definitely, ladies lady comes into the room and everyone stands and also respect for the elderly, but that's not connected to this passage. But you see how very opposite this culture is in thinking about the lives of children in the womb to our culture, to just making them come out early.

Could cost you a fortune and if they died, you died. That was murder. Accidentally bumping her and she gives birth prematurely and the baby dies because after a few days because the baby was preterm and that gets the death penalty. You see how very, very much God values. His image in children who are in the womb.

Now the god who wrote? Exodus 21 verse 22, through 24 or 25 rather is the same. God before whom America lives and exists. And all we could do is marvel at how patient he has been with us, but we, we should have. If God shows a special care for their lives, then also, we should so God values, his own image in human life.

He also values his own honor and established authorities and particularly the authorities that are his first representatives to us. He who strikes, his father, or his mother shall surely be put to death, because what is he doing? He's striking God's representative to him. It's violating the fifth commandment and so honor your father and mother.

So that your life may be long in the land that the Lord, your God has given you. But if you strike your father and mother, your life will be very, very short and the land that the Lord, your God is giving you, but not just striking because we come back in verse 17.

And here he who curses his father or mother. So, I'll surely be put to death. Why? Because the fifth commandment was not just obey your father and mother. It was not just submit to your father and mother. It was honor your father and mother cursing them is exactly the opposite.

So the Lord expects his people to live in society that says a mom and a dad are the first God ordained got appointed. God representing authorities that he gives you in your life and there is a special deference to them. Not only as authorities, but as one's from whom and through whom your life came to whom Providence, especially assigned in the most miraculous of ways, and you are to respect your parents from the heart.

If you don't respect your parents from the heart, you are blaspheming your Creator. If you blaspheme your Creator, not only should you be put out of the church but you should, but you will go to hell apart from the atonement and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, how do we continue these laws today?

At the very least, children who strike and to grow up to be cursors of mother and father should be excommunicated from the church. There shouldn't be this extended multi-year. No man's land. Where a child who is a covenant, child continues to have membership in the church while doing things that would have gotten them executed in Israel.

Now, Israel is a church and a state at the same time. So there's some some ways in which capital punishment finds its continuity in the sword of the state. And then there are some ways in which capital punishments, find their continuity in the keys of the kingdom where they're put out of the church.

It also does justify a father who puts a child out of the home, as soon as he's able to support himself for committing. This sin, The church can put him out of the church. The father can't put him out of the home until he's able to support himself. But as soon as he's able to support himself, the the father is

Authorized by this passage to do that. So some very, very serious ways that this would still apply today but the Lord helping us the application for you will not be to figure out who should punish you and what sphere. And how much hopefully for you the application will be God, really wants me to honor my mom from the heart.

God really wants me to honor my dad from the heart.

All right. Well, let's pray that the Lord would help us in the keeping of the two commandments that find application here and pray for Reformation in the church and in the state.

Lord, forgive us before. We just have not treasured your image in others. Like we should We're easily judgmental or hostile or quick, to be angry or lashing out when we see by the penalties. That Israel is a state was to inflict for murder or even injuring.

That you take this very seriously. Thank you for the reminder that our lives are in your hands and that when accidents come. It was you who delivered the one into the other's hand? We pray Lord's that you would help us to especially care about the lives of the poor.

And that we would, especially care about the lives of pregnant mothers and unborn children, Lord help us to honor our Father and mother from him through whom you gave us life in this world. Remembering how seriously you take the dishonoring of a parent as evidenced in this passage often.

Lord our flesh wants to respond by thinking that something you say or a punishment that you command is too severe. Oh, forgive us for. We have no concept of your holiness when we think that sitting against you could receive a punishment that is too severe. When we think of moms and dads, we often Lord are failing to think about you all together.

I'll have mercy on us that we could sit down and think about, right? And wrong and wisdom. And and propriety and do so without factoring, who you are and how we are interacting with you into the equation. But obviously, from from this passage Lord, in the way our hearts tend to respond to it.

That is the case with us how we thank you that you've had such mercy on us. That even for suchinners, you Father have given your son. Our Lord Jesus who honored and loved and hallowed you perfectly that he would bear the hell that such dishonors of parents as we are and such despisers of other men.

As we are might receive as his righteousness deserves. And so we pray that he would be glorified, not only by the right standing that he has won us with you. But by your spirits making us to be more and more like him that our lives would bear that out.

Would you pray for our country? And which the dishonoring of parents is almost institutionalized and the naming of generations in the despising of previous generations. By following ones have mercy on a nation that commits, such continual murder, not only the heart but even and the taking of life and even in a concerted assault on those children in the womb for whom you show such reference here.

Lord, even now. O God Grant Reformation. Grant Revival the spare or else. Lord. How can you let such a people of such murder? Continue. Come down. Oh god and display yourself. We ask that it would be by mercy in Jesus name. Amen.