

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 21, beginning in verse 12 and going through verse 17. These are the words of God. He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

However, if you did not lie in wait but God delivered him into his hand and I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. And if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.

And he, who strikes? His father or his mother shall 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. He who curses his father or his mother shall, surely be put to that. If men contend with each other and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die.

But as confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall 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 he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished for his property. If men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely yet, no harm follows. He shall surely be 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. Eye for eye, 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, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye and if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

So far the reading of God's inspired and and Aaron tort We saw last week when we came into this section of the statutes and judgments which is the application of the moral law in the Civil law, that Israel that the Lord gave to Israel as a society that the first laws given were those for slaves.

And we had to operate from that important hermeneutical principle This morning. We saw the Holy Spirit carrying them along to say that God has granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life and we said well, why would the Holy Spirit say repentance unto life? For make them say repentance unto life.

Instead of faith unto life. And the answer is the Holy Spirit is more wise than we are. Well, when we come to the Civil law, there are oftentimes in which because of the time in in which we live in a place in which we live the society, in which we live Things.

Rob us the wrong way and we have to operate from that other. Great and important. Hermeneutical principle that the Holy Spirit is not just more wise than we are. But more righteous more just than we are. And so we discovered operating by that principle and and thinking through the passage both in the context of the life of Israel.

And in what we know of the ancient Near East that, these laws concerning slaves, distinguished themselves from all other laws concerning slaves and all of the really types of slavery. Not just at that time, but in the history of man, right up until the present day in a world where slavery still occurs by force and by power, and we find out in this passage today, that that type of slavery wasn't permitted at all in Israel.

But we discovered that the laws concerning slavery were built on foundations of liberty, and love and dignity. Three things that you don't often think of when you think here about slavery. And so it was a very different sort of thing. Now why was it that slaves were so valued?

Was it just because Israel had been slaved and slaves in Egypt so that they could not be made lifelong slaves, maximum of six years. And there were laws incentivizing love of owner for slave and slave for owner. Especially the laws about the provision of a wife, he wouldn't have to marry and if he wanted to, he could have waited to marry her until he was free and so forth.

And so, in order for those that law to end up being followed through upon there was, there were incentives for love, or even the dignity of a woman who unable her family. Unable to pay a dowry could be sold into marriage That way. And her family could actually be financially helped and yet she was to be treated as a wife.

Every bit as much as a wife who has gained another way. Dignity was it just because Israel had been slaves. So, they really knew what it was like and and God was helping them to to see how they ought to treat others. Well, the value of the life of every man including as as we'll see, including slaves as established not because not from the first not from the second great commandment, love your neighbor as yourself.

But from the first great, commandment, The fact that man is made in the image of God. And so when this passage goes right into that, he who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely, be put to death. It's just applying what Genesis 9:6 had already commanded that.

He who sheds man's blood by? Man, his blood shall be shed, capital punishment. For murder is God commanded for all societies in all times. It's not just a general equity principle here. There's a commanded to all humanity in Genesis 9 requirement here. So, Genesis 9:6 applies to murder. But one of the things that, that this part of the, the statutes of Israel immediately does is it draws a distinction between intentional killing and accidental, killing, and it does so on the basis of Providence?

However, if he did not lie in weight but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. And this is most most clearly the case in in the case of self-defense or neighbor defense that we out of a out of a value, not only for our own life or our neighbor's life, but also desire not to see.

The perpetrator make himself a murderer that we resist with force and sometimes that force becomes lethal force. And in that case, God has delivered that man. We would say that that was a providence from God in which the wicked man who was attempting to murder was by the Providence of God by the province of God.

He forfeited his life, because God put into that situation, whether as the victim or someone who came to the aid of the victim, someone who respects life enough and loves neighbor enough And even to defend, And even loves enemy enough to attempt to prevent sin. And so there's a recognition That, of course, is the most extreme case, but they're even, there are even cases of accident, but being a good Calvinist.

And you should understand that that is of course facetious Calvin was a good Calvinist because he was following God. And yet, God doesn't speak of accidents, does he? He speaks of accidental killing as God, delivering into his hand, The number of our days and every one of them are written in God's book before one of them come to be.

And so from the human perspective is an unintentional death and yet even in something like unintentional death, there is the determination of God, the plan, the ordination of God. And that's a great comfort to us when something that appears to us to be accidental or untimely. Death comes along, we can say well God is the one who delivers?

Who delivers unto death, But you wouldn't get the death penalty unless it was premeditated. And if it was premeditated verse 14, says prison conversions. Can't save you. The guy who is grabbing onto the altar and says I trust in the God of Israel, who has given a toning blood for the forgiveness of our sins and that may and well be true if the Lord brought him to repentance and faith and he may be trusting in the God of Israel.

And yet, the eternal mercy of God, on his soul must not be extended in the temporal. Mercy of the state to him, says, even from my altar, you go get the premeditating murderer and you execute him. And so there is not an exception for those who come to faith and repentance after having committed their murder.

And if they're well taught from the Bible, they will say I have forfeited my life. We must obey. Jesus, You should carry out the sentence because my redeemer, My Redeemer says, you should and my soul is safe with him, but the state will not be safe if we disobey him.

That's how a well-instructed murderer who gets converted would speak in light of Exodus 21 verse 14, But even if death does not ensue in this striking. So you have the striking in verse 12 and the striking in verse 18 and this is important when we get to the child with his, with his parents.

If the man that is struck ends up bedridden and does not rise verse 19. The implication is that there's still the death penalty. The rest of the victim's life has effectively been taken from him And if he does rise, then the perpetrator is actually spared by the providence of God that kept his victim from dying and enabled his victim to get up, but it can still be extremely costly if the man never fully recovers and does not able to work.

And now, the perpetrator has his victim as a dependent and must pay for him. And so you can see in the Civil law that God gives Israel and these statutes and judgments, and these judgments that, that God gives Israel, that the image of God. And man is highly valued.

Now not only the image of God in man but the honor of God in parental authority. It's important that we see that verse 15 and verse 17 here. Come in the context where the striking is assault with a intent to kill. This is This is a vicious and a possibly lethal.

But in this case, not necessarily successful attack in verse 15. And if it's from a child to a parent, it actually doesn't matter if they, if the parents survives, the attack is enough for it to be a capital punishment because that parent is in the place of God to the child.

That parent is to be honored with the honor that belongs to God treated as weighty with the weightiness that belongs to God. Oh, dear children. The, the church does not have the power of the sort and there are things when you have a state and a church put together that might have been capital crimes in Israel.

That when the church and the state become separated, not God and the state, by the way, when the church in the state become two, different things, they may not be capital crimes but they are excommunicable crimes. We ought in the church to teach our children that they are to honor their parents with the honor that belongs to God, and a child who grows up to be an attacker, an assalter of his, or her parents or a cursor of his, or her parents are different words for cursing in Hebrew.

This particular one is the one that is that is as far as a vocabulary is concerned diametrically opposed to the word for honor. It is a repudiation, a denouncing of the parent's status as a parent. We actually heard every once in a while, while I was growing up, I'm sure it's gotten worse.

Although I haven't heard of it in a while of children who sued to divorce their parents to be brought out from under them Now, social workers go in and do that all the time. On the word of a child. God have mercy on a society that so lightly and easily does such things But this this renouncing of your parents who have been assigned to you by God, That also was punishable by death in Israel.

And that also, as far as ongoing application is concerned ought to be excommunicable in the church. The church does not have the power of the sword, but it does have the power to put the child out of the society of God on the earth, which is now found in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the father should be willing to carry through especially in the case of the attack upon or the cursing of his wife and the child's mother to take a child who is of age and excommunicate him from the house for such conduct as that recognizing that God, who invests the sixth commandment with the dignity of his image invests.

The fifth commandment with the dignity of his authority. These things rub us the wrong way because we're Americans. We don't take God, seriously and has lost seriously, But if we would do, so in Christian homes and in Christian churches, Perhaps the Lord would be pleased to bless it to our children, that they would take the image of God and other seriously.

And especially the honor of God in the status and position of their parents. Seriously, one of the great things here. There were laws that, you know, they sound more like Saudi Arabia than the Bible and there's a reason for that same author of the perversion of the moral law.

There were laws in the Mesopotamian cultures that you know if a child cursed his father his tongue would be cut off. And if a child struck his father with a hand, the hand that struck would be cut off. You know who those laws? Never protected. The mother because mother was not considered as having an authority that came from not that they were cultures that knew not God.

And so, there's even in the inclusion of mother here in verse 15 and mother in verse 17, The recognition that this is something unique that comes from the law of God, for the people of God because it is the honor of God, that is in your parents. That's why you shouldn't talk back children.

That's why you should honor your parents, both of them from the heart. And one of the things that a godly father will do as he will back. Mama up, not just because it's necessary for the order of the house. And, and for the, for the, as a foundation for the church.

And for the society, it is all of those things. But because his wife, those children's mother has been set over them by God and he wants not only his wife to be honored which he should. She

is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. He wants his children to learn the honor of God in the authority, that God has established.

And then there's the death penalty for man stealing verse 16, he who kidnaps a man and sells him or if he has found in his hand and had a chance to sell him yet. Surely, He shall surely be put to death dying. He shall die. It's the same level of emphasis as in the garden in the day that you eat of it dying, you shall die.

And so power-based slavery, where men are stolen not the, not the economic solution as we discussed and described last week, that was forbidden. That's the sort of slavery that is based upon man. Stealing got the death penalty in Israel. So yes, if you're in a society in which the economic realities have made slavery, a reality than there are all sorts of laws that God gives that govern, how you think of and treat a slave.

But the way slavery happens in pretty much every other society that there has ever been. But this one didn't The way is slavery. Often happened in Israel because they didn't follow their law. Very well was punishable by death. So that verses 12 through 14, the law is about murder, they protected even slaves.

If a man beats his male, or female servant with a rod, said, he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Well, what's the punishment? Well, look at verse 12 and verse 14. And this is in the case when the slave deserves. The blows. Remember you operate under the assumption that the Holy Spirit is more just and righteous than you.

So we don't read verse 21 from our sinfulness and say notwithstanding. If he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished for. He is his property and say, oh well, then a man who enjoys beating people can go out and buy himself a slave and now he's his property.

Beat him whenever he wants. Now, the implication of verse 21 is that the one who had sold himself or economically had had to come in because of his poverty into the slavery, was refusing to act as the property was refusing to serve his master. And so he required correction.

So verse 21 is modifying or or helping us understand better verse 20. And that the slave in verse 20 is one who actually was rebelling and received blows and died as a result of those blows, and the master would be executed for that. And so we see how the law here actually tempers, even the corporal punishment.

The bodily punishment that a slave would receive if it's followed well. At some point we'll start making those caveats. But remember, Israel did not do these things. This is just showing the justness of God and the difference between his rules for society and all the other societies around them.

In fact you when applying the corporal punishment would also want to stay away from any permanent sort of damage, You're losing a tooth. They didn't have orthodontists and dentists and such a tooth was not a vital organ for them and yet it was a permanent alteration to someone who was a six-year rental.

And God really does give statutes here. That protect even a rebellious slave, who deserves as beating in a way that was was revolutionary in the engineer eastern. Cultures, it was revolutionary because men are made in the image of God. Even those who come into such straightened economic circumstances in Israel as they would end up slaves.

Well, if you have even in the case of a slave in this passage, then you have especially in the case of a pregnant mom or a child in the womb. If by accident, two men who are trying to murder each other, bump a pregnant woman and no harm comes.

She's okay babies. Okay. The only thing that happens is you know, whether from the excitement to the physical jostling or whatever it is, she goes into labor and the baby's born early and the baby is healthy. It's fine. Just not having had consideration for her while they were trying to kill each.

Other makes them liable to whatever the dad wants to inflict upon them. This is a case in which there's no harm. The only limit on what the dad can require is, what the judges say, what the judges approve. And with this statute from God on the books. It's pretty much a blank check. If you're a wise judge and a city in Israel.

And one of these cases comes before you say Exodus 21, guys, maybe you should have been more careful and you're trying to murder each other and God and done it somewhere else, because there was a pregnant, mama, and a child in the womb where you were, what this, whatever, this dad wants, whatever this husband wants, he gets it. And so causing premature birth.

My accident could be almost limitedly costly and the child and the woman was protected not just by fines but by retribution you can hear here, not vindictiveness. But the driving home of the prescribed penalty that that child in the womb is every bit as much in the image of God and as dignified has a right to every aspect of who they are, as any grown man, who is feeling himself, vigorous enough to contend with another man for his life.

And so, you see if any, man, if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life. If the baby dies, both of those guys die. That's two. Death penalties for one, death life for life. I for I tooth for tooth hand, for hand foot, for foot burn for burn, wound for wound.

Striped for stripe. It's not a fine was physically inflicted. You see? There's God values His image and men even enslaves but especially in pregnant mamas and children in the womb and that ought to make the blood of a 21st century American run cold because it is the especially that our society.

Our nation has flaunted in the face of God has funded a government subsidized. All out assault on children in the womb and it didn't end with the end of row. Now, we have states and cities setting themselves up to be complicit in the murder. We have all sorts of people.

And even in the church, say whole but think of the pregnant mothers and how they feel. No, Think about the pregnant mothers and the position that they're in before. God and seek with all your heart that they would be delivered.

From participating in or even contemplating the murder of those who God especially protect it in this section on capital crimes. Disregard for the child in the womb. Puts one and as direct as possible and opposition to scripturally righteous laws for society. Disregard not just assault failing to protect.

So in conclusion, we see that in the laws of the society of Israel got valued his own image in human life and his own honor in parental authority. And therefore we must value his image in human life and his honor in parental authority and our families on our hearts.

First each of us and our households in our church and then our society assess God briefly that he would make it. So, our Father in heaven. Oh, help us. Which should be able to read things

like this. Not just and present company, but among anyone who professes Christ and among any one in the society and have them see and acknowledge the wisdom and the justness of these laws that you have given, but we have come to such a low point, both in the nation, and even in much of the church, that those who, No, your righteous law and that those who do such things deserve death, not only do them, but approve of those who do have mercy on us or God help each of us, we pray to love you to love the reality of your image and human beings.

And to make the way that we think about and respond to them the way we think about how to conduct our homes, and our congregation, our societies to reflect this glorious, reality of your making man, and his image, and Lord, all restore to us the honoring of Father and mother, and the placing of great emphasis upon that honor, and how we order and respond to dishonoring.

When it occurs, we feel ourselves needy. We're so grateful that it is Christ and His perfect righteousness that you have counted for us but we long to see him glorified in his professing church and then professing households. And by professing Christians by the reflection of his morality in our lives.

Grant it. We ask then in his name, Amen.