

Sermon Notes

Exodus – The Revealing of God’s Glory and His Design for the Chosen #74

“Laws of Retaliation” – Exodus 21:12-36

I. Introduction.

A. Recent news regarding the sentencing of a convicted murderer.

1. Hung jury on the sentencing phase.

B. US Courts wrestle with denunciations of guilt and innocence every day.

1. Sometimes, we wonder if justice has been served.

C. The Book of the Covenant offers some guidance.

1. Many offenses noted, but far from all.

2. Book of the covenant structure.

a. Begins with slavery – Exodus 21:1-11

b. Next section – various crimes.

1. Capital crimes, verses 12-17

2. Personal injury, verses 18-27

3. Criminal negligence, verses 18-27

D. Reading of the text: Exodus 21:12-36

II. Exposition

A. Capital Crimes, verses 12-17

1. Crimes that require the death penalty.

2. Verse 12 – Murder one.

a. Hebrew “dying – he shall be put to death.”

b. Correlates to the Sixth Commandment.

c. Genesis 9:5b-6, Deuteronomy 17:6-7

3. Verses 13-14 – Crimes of Passion

a. Involuntary manslaughter

b. Contrast with Ancient Near East culture.

c. God’s way – Cities of Refuge.

1. Allowed for time of investigation.

See Num. 35:6-15; Deut. 19:1-3

2. Note Joab – I Kings 2:28-34

d. Note how mothers (females) were to be protected – unlike Ancient Near East law codes. (Vs. 15)

1. Hebrew term – vicious assault.

e. No slave trade, Verse 16.

1. Deuteronomy 24:7; I Timothy 1:10

B. Personal Injury, Verses 18-27

1. Restitution is key.

2. Masters are permitted to invoke corporal punishment, but no injury permitted.

3. Protection for innocent bystanders, verse 22.

4. Verses 23-25 – Covered later.

C. Criminal negligence, Verses 28-32

1. Animals out of control.

2. Distinguishing between an accident or an accident with a preventable cause.

D. Lex Talionis – The Law of E_____ E_____

1. Verses 23-25

2. Famous because of the Sermon on the Mount.

a. Matthew 5:38-39.

3. Original intent – Stop people from taking their own revenge and do not over punish.

4. Sounds barbaric “eye for eye”?

a. Jewish understanding throughout the centuries.

b. Note translation concerns.

5. Time of Jesus

a. The Law was being applied in the strict sense.

1. Jesus refutes in Matthew 5:39.

III. Points for Reflection.

A. Assaulting another person, who was made in the image of God, warrants death.

B. Do not make judgments, determinations, and rulings before you have all the facts. Remain neutral.

C. Be responsible with your property, possessions and animals so as to protect other people from injury.

D. Err on the side of “turn the other cheek” rather than “eye for eye.”