

## Exodus 21

*When we come across passages that may be uncomfortable. We should have a few handy tools that help us navigate:*

1. Do not read our culture into the story. Remember, the modern western culture is far from perfect. In ancient times, fathers arranged marriages. Marriage was a more like a business transaction between 2 families.
2. When we come across words that seem to contradict Genesis 1:26, we need to slow down and ask some good questions. Man and woman are created in the image of God. Period. We are reading a translation, in different culture and land. There may be language barriers that may be stumbling blocks: slaves, property, sell off, etc. For example, Ex 21: 20: “since the slave is their property” ...this language is an unfortunate translation. The idea is that the employer would not intentionally kill an employee....as it would impact the economic output of his farm.
3. With a lot of these laws, we have to ask: Who is this law protecting? What is the wisdom behind these laws?

## Review of Genesis 47

- Famine in land. Joseph has stockpiled food.
- People were starving.
- Used up money, livestock and land to survive. Eventually they sold themselves into slavery/servanthood, in order to survive.
- This is VOLUNTARY.

## Pharaoh's system

- INVOLUNTARY for the people.
- Motivation is to prop up this president and his administration.
- Systemic oppression of a whole people group.
- State sanctioned murder of baby boys.

## Israel's Welfare System

- In Israel, people contracted to work for a family if one falls into poverty.

## Guardrails

When people are desperate and enter into a contract with a family, there is a standard to care for the poor. Israel is not to return to the oppressive, unjust system they came out of. God is opposed to oppression of the needy-whether a Hebrew or non-Hebrew. If poor people are mistreated, God will not hold them guiltless (Deu 22: 19)

Here are the guardrails:

- This was temporary. Every 7 years, servants were to go free. And when they are released, the people are to be given a stash of resources to start their lives over. (Deu 15)
- If people feel on hard times, the 50<sup>th</sup> year was another opportunity to restart your family's economic capacity. Land is returned to people. No such thing as generational poverty...if the people followed this system. (Lev 25)
- Kidnapping people is off limits. People who engage in human trafficking are to be put to death in Israel. There is no slave trade.

## 10 Commandments (the foundation)

We just were given the 10 commandments provide the foundation for how Israel relates to God and to others.

We are now given 42 examples that will show Israel how to apply what we just learned in real life, messy situations. If we spoke Hebrew, we would see that there is significance in the design in this chapter. These 42 examples are given to provide case law...as to how to think thru some of the messiest situations a community will have to address. These are representative cases that should help the people gain wisdom in how to live.

You have the 10 commandments. Now what do we do in real life?

Intention is important in these laws. Did the accused intentionally do something to harm another human or animal?

Murder is treated with severity as are other violations such as cursing your parents.

Who is this law trying to protect?