### Exodus

## Chapter 21

[Editor note: God now outlines more detailed laws for the new nation. The story continues in Exodus 23:20.]  
  
  
1‘Now, these are the Laws that you are to show to them:  
  
  
 2‘If you buy a Hebrew slave, he may only serve you for 6 years; for in the 7th year, he must be set free without cost.  
  
 3‘If he comes alone, he must leave alone; but if his wife comes with him, his wife must also leave with him. 4However, if his master gives him a wife and she gives birth to sons or daughters; she and her children belong to the master, so [the slave] will leave alone.  
  
 5‘But if the slave should say:  
  
 ‘I love my master, my woman, and my children, so I don’t want to leave free...’  
  
 6...then this master should bring him to the judgment-seat of God and take him up to the door, where he will use an awl to punch [a hole through] his ear against the doorframe, [to signify] that he will serve [his master] throughout the age.  
  
  
 7‘And if anyone sells his daughter as a house slave, she may not be sent away as other female slaves are released... 8For if she has been involved with him and if she thereafter hasn’t been found pleasing by him, he may only set her free… He may not sell her to some foreigner after that.  
  
  
 9‘And if he’s obtained the wife for his son, he must treat her as his own daughter. 10But if he’s taken her for himself, he must never deprive her of her clothing, her needs, or her companionship with him. 11If he refuses to do any of these three things for her, she must be set free at no cost.  
  
  
 12‘If any man strikes another man and kills him, he must absolutely be put to death. 13But if such a thing should happen by accident, or if God [allows the situation that causes the death]; I’ll provide a place to which the killer can run.  
  
 14‘However, if someone who lies in wait and plans to murder his neighbor runs to that refuge, you must take him [far] from My Altar and put him to death.  
  
  
 15‘Whoever beats his father or mother must be put to death, 16and whoever curses his father or mother must die.  
  
  
 17‘If someone overpowers and kidnaps one of the children of IsraEl and sells him, or if he’s caught with him; [the kidnapper] must die.  
  
  
 18‘If two men are shouting at each other and one hits the other with a rock or with his fist, and he doesn’t die but is laid up in bed; 19the man who hit him will be cleared if the other person can get up and walk (even with the aid of a cane), as long as he pays for the lost time and the cost of his healing.  
  
  
 20‘If a man hits his male or female slave with a cane and the person dies as a result, he must be punished. 21However, if the slave continues to live a few days after that, the master shouldn’t be punished, because it’s his own loss.  
  
  
 22‘If two men are fighting and [one] hits a pregnant woman and her child is born deformed as a result; he must be forced to pay whatever amount her man demands of him.  
  
 23‘But if the child is born perfectly formed [although injured], he must pay life for life, 24eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25burning for burning, wound for wound, whipping for whipping.  
  
  
 26‘If anyone should hit their male or female slave in the eye and put it out, that slave should be set free because of the eye injury.  
  
 27‘And if he [breaks or knocks out] a male or female slave’s tooth, that slave must be set free because of the tooth.  
  
  
 28‘If a bull gores a man or a woman and he or she dies, the bull must be stoned to death and its flesh may not be eaten… However, the bull’s owner will be [free of guilt].  
  
 29‘But if the bull has been known to gore before and the owner was told and hasn’t done anything about it, and then it kills a man or woman; the bull must be stoned and its owner must also die.  
  
 30‘However, if a ransom is demanded instead, he must pay whatever is asked for his life.  
  
  
 31‘If a bull gores someone’s son or daughter, it must be handled according to the law that was given... 32But if the bull gores a male or female slave, their master must be paid 30 double-silver coins, and the bull must be stoned.  
  
  
 33‘If anyone digs an open pit or a hole in rock and fails to cover it, and an ox or a burro falls into it; 34the owner of the pit must pay a compensation to [the animal’s] owner, but the dead [animal] will thereafter be his.  
  
  
 35‘And if a man’s bull should gore his neighbor’s bull and kill it, they must sell the living bull and divide the money, then divide up the dead bull. 36However, if the bull has been known to gore in the past and his owner knew about this and failed to do anything about it; he must pay for the bull, and the dead one won’t be his.’