



*But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (Gal 3:22-25)*

Having just completed a detailed study of the Ten Commandments of God, I think it appropriate to point out that these have never been annulled or done away with – they are as binding upon us today as when thundered by the Voice of God from the earth shaking Cloud atop Sinai. They were, at that time, written by the very finger of God on Stone Tables. We could not have known the great magnitude of God’s Majesty had we not learned it by steps – it was too great to learn on short notice. So God gave His Law of Commandments to reveal to us our great need and depravity, thereby we learned that we can, in no wise, enter in the presence of God with the hands made filthy by fleshly lust and greed. Not being able to keep the Law of God, we came to understand the urgent need of a Redeemer and Savior. Yet, we are still bound with bands of love to keep the Commandments of God inviolate.

It is very difficult to learn the science of music unless one loves music. If he loves music, he will eagerly learn the notes and chords thereof; but if he hates the drudgery of that science, he will attempt to learn unnaturally and with great dread that science. The same is true of obedience to God. Once we have come to the point of knowing God with intimate love and understanding, obedience becomes a burning desire rather than a dutiful dread. We grew in knowledge and understanding of God beginning with our expulsion from Eden; then the journeying of Abraham in following after God; then the bondage in Egypt; then the great plagues with which God struck the land and the miracles which saved Israel from those same plagues; then the great salvation at the shores of the Red Sea; the Manna and Water from the Rock; and finally, the issuance of the Ten Commandments. Centuries past and finally god sent forth His only Begotten Son, after four hundred years of silence, so that we might know God in the fullness of His wonder and beauty. We had come to know that we were without merit or virtue – only a Savior would suffice – and we came to have God’s commandments written in the soft sinews of our hearts. *After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jer 31:33)*

We now turn from the Commandments of God to the ordinances and laws of Moses to facilitate our obedience. If no consequence follows disobedience, there is no substance to the Law that we have broken; so Israel is given detailed accounts of the manner in which God’s Law will be implemented and the punishments for disobedience beginning in Chapter 21. These are divided into two major headings: 1) Laws for servants of Israel; and 2) Laws for personal liability and injuries. I will give far

less emphasis to this chapter due to the fact that it is merely a mode of applying the Law given to daily life much of which is no longer relevant in our day since servants are not owned in civil societies (for example).

Verses 1-11 have reference to the judicial laws and ordinances regarding servitude and the servant's rights under God's Law. Servitude can be an emblem of the old man under bondage to sin and the devil. But God provides an escape, always, for the soul to be released from such bondage. I will point out only selected verses from these eleven. *If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.* (Ex 21:2) The seventh year is a sabbatical year, both spiritual and fiscal. Each seventh year, the servants must be set free without personal charge to them.

Did you ever wonder where the notion of a Genie in a bottle comes from, or from whence came the great golden earring. The Jinn (or Jinni, singular) comes from the ancient Persian, but derived from Arabian and Quranic superstitions. The Jinni (or Genie in a bottle) was related in *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp* (among other tales). The Genie appears out of a vapor from the magic bottle when rubbed. It is strong and powerful, and able to act with magical wonders. But it is a slave to its owner (who owns the lamp). It wears a great golden earring to evidence its volunteer bondage. When I see a man wearing an earring, I wonder "*to whom is he a bond-servant*" – but I have an idea! The following verse may give further clarification of the reason for the bond-servant's earring: *And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.* (Ex 21:5-6) Some have theorized that the bond-servant who wishes to remain so filled that unsightly hole in his ear with an earring. Effeminate young man, whose slave are YOU?

Remember: the Law is our schoolmaster. While learning our ABCs in school, we had to sit through boring classes and respond each time we were called on by the teacher. Every math or science problem was a designed scenario that required our solution; however, upon our graduation, we applied those principles, learned under duress, in school to the real life problems and business dealings in which we were rewarded by profitable outcomes. The Christian, in loving God's Law, and the Author of that Law, cheerfully seeks ways to obey God and to promote obedience in others. In examining verses 12-19, we find a rather advanced and sophisticated treatment concerning laws that are quite timely today. *12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.* God ordained the death penalty, without exception, for premeditated murder. American law did as well until recent years. God also makes an allowance for murders by accident or passion: *13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.* This describes accidental killings or unavoidable circumstances that lead to death of victims. Cities of Refuge were established so that a man might run there to escape the Avenger of blood (next of kin of victim). But before Cities of Refuge, a man might claim sanctuary at the altar of God.

*14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.* Sanctuary was denied a man of deliberate intention of murder.

Now comes a dire warning to children who have dishonored their mother and father. The verse here bears out the grave need for Christ in their lives: *"15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death."* Christ, through our

heartily repentance and turn to Him, offers salvation from that death sentence.

The civil law of God also makes provision for the death sentence for kidnapping. American law did as well until recent decades. *16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.*

Sorry, young folks, but here comes another broadsides against disrespect of parents: *17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.*

Next comes provision for liability to be paid to one injured by another: *18 And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: 19 If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.* (Ex 21:18-19)

**What does God say in this chapter regarding abortion?** *22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.* (Ex 21:22-25) Clearly, abortion is regarded by God as MURDER if the fetus (child in the womb) is hurt fatally.

Negligent homicide also ranks on the same level as MURDER: *28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29 But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.* (Ex 21:28-29)

The laws and ordinances of Moses also addressed matters of equity in dealing with others: *33 And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; 34 The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. 35 And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. 36 Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own.* (Ex 21:33-36)

God loves His Creation – He places a high premium upon the lives that He has created. His laws are designed to protect life, and facilitate a happy and free society. Without laws, this is not possible.