

## Moses – part 21

*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"*  
by Victor Torres

Israel was given laws through Moses, and they thought this will be the standard to which God will hold them in order to be saved. Moses called these laws their righteousness and commanded Israel to teach them to their children.

Deu 6:6 (ERV) Always remember these commands that I give you today.

Deu 6:7 Be sure to teach them to your children. Talk about these commands when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up.

Deu 6:24 (KJV) And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

Deu 6:25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

However, the Lord later revealed to us that we are not saved by obeying the law given through Moses. We are saved by having the faith of Jesus Christ.

Rom 3:19 (ERV) What the law says is for those who are under the law. It stops anyone from making excuses. And it brings the whole world under God's judgment,

Rom 3:20 **because no one can be made right with God by following the law. The law only shows us our sin.**

Rom 3:21 But God has a way to make people right, and it has nothing to do with the law. He has now shown us that new way, which the law and the prophets told us about.

Rom 3:22 (KJV) Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

God has a way to make people right, and it has nothing to do with the law. It is only having the faith of Jesus Christ that will get be saved. When we have the faith of Jesus Christ, we live under a much higher set of laws, the law of God. So keep this in mind while we go through the other laws our Lord had given Israel.

Exo 20:24 (CEV) Build an altar out of earth, and offer on it your sacrifices of sheep, goats, and cattle. Wherever I choose to be worshiped, I will come down to bless you.

Exo 20:25 (MKJV) And if you will make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of cut stone. For if you lift up your tool upon it, you have defiled it.

Notice how specific the Lord is with His commands. He doesn't just tell us what to do, He also tells us how to do it, and it is for our benefit if we listen intently to His instructions. 'Build an altar out of earth, but if you build an altar out of stones, don't use tools to cut them or I will not accept that altar.'

How do we apply these commands to us today? We don't offer animal sacrifices, and people certainly use all kinds of tools to build their churches. In the new testament, we are told what we should offer to God as our sacrifice:

Rom 12:1 (KJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**

We are the temple of God, and our body is our offering to God. If we use it to serve God's people, our sacrifice will be acceptable to Him.

Exo 20:25 (MKJV) And if you will make Me an altar of stone, **you shall not build it of cut stone. For if you lift up your tool upon it, you have defiled it.**

Now why were the Israelites told not to use tools if they are building an altar made out of stones? What is this telling us today?

Pro 3:5 (ESV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

There are people who mix their own understanding with God's words. They rely on their own wisdom to interpret the words of God, and this is the equivalent of using tools when building an altar of stones.

Exo 20:26 (CEV) And don't build an altar that requires steps; you might expose yourself when you climb up.

This is telling us not to have levels or hierarchy within the church of God. We are all valuable parts of a body, and we must not think highly of ourselves.

Rom 12:3 (ESV) For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Our Lord emptied Himself of God's spirit, and He took on the form of a slave to show us true humility.

Php 2:3 (ERV) In whatever you do, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. **Be humble, and honor others more than yourselves.**

Php 2:4 Don't be interested only in your own life, but care about the lives of others too.

Php 2:5 In your life together, **think the way Christ Jesus thought.**

Php 2:6 He was like God in every way, but he did not think that his being equal with God was something to use for his own benefit.

Php 2:7 (LITV) **but emptied Himself, taking *the* form of a slave**, having become in *the* likeness of men

Php 2:8 and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even *the* death of a cross.

Jesus took the form of a slave. Keep that in mind as we go through these laws which He gave Moses and Israel concerning slaves.

Exo 21:1 (CEV) The LORD gave Moses the following laws for his people:

Exo 21:2 If you buy a Hebrew slave, he must remain your slave for six years. But in the seventh year you must set him free, without cost to him.

Exo 21:3 If he was single at the time you bought him, he alone must be set free. But if he was married at the time, both he and his wife must be given their freedom.

Exo 21:4 If you give him a wife, and they have children, only the man himself must be set free; his wife and children remain the property of his owner.

Exo 21:5 (KJV) And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

Exo 21:6 his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door or to the door-post. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever.

Exo 21:7 (CEV) A young woman who was sold by her father doesn't gain her freedom in the same way that a man does.

Exo 21:8 If she doesn't please the man who bought her to be his wife, he must let her be bought back. He cannot sell her to foreigners; this would break the contract he made with her.

Exo 21:9 If he selects her as a wife for his son, he must treat her as his own daughter.

Exo 21:10 If the man later marries another woman, he must continue to provide food and clothing for the one he bought and to treat her as a wife.

Exo 21:11 If he fails to do any of these things, she must be given her freedom without cost.

Remember these laws on how to treat slaves and how to treat others are based on these laws:

Mat 22:37 (ESV) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Mat 22:38 This is the great and first commandment.

Mat 22:39 And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

Mat 22:40 (BBE) On these two rules all the law and the prophets are based.

The benefits of these laws were certainly not enjoyed by Israel when they were slaves of the Egyptians. We know that there was no law to set them free after six years because they were enslaved for hundreds of years.

Israel was even told to provide goods to the slave they were setting free:

Deu 15:12 (CEV) If any of you buy Israelites as slaves, you must set them free after six years.

Deu 15:13 And don't just tell them they are free to leave--

Deu 15:14 give them sheep and goats and a good supply of grain and wine. The more the LORD has given you, the more you should give them.

Deu 15:15 I am commanding you to obey the LORD as a reminder that you were slaves in Egypt before he set you free.

If a man gives a slave to his son to marry, but his son marries another woman, that man needs to provide food and clothing to that slave that his son left and treat her as his wife. I doubt that there was any law in Egypt with this kind of consideration to slaves. In fact, we are told that the Egyptians made the life of the Israelites bitter and miserable.

Exo 1:14 (BBE) **And made their lives bitter with hard work**, making building-material and bricks, and doing all sorts of work in the fields **under the hardest conditions**.

However, even though Israel was much nicer to their slaves than the Egyptians were, as much as they obeyed these laws, it is not enough to get them in the first resurrection. They were not given the faith of Jesus Christ.

Slaves back then became slaves for various reasons, but the main reasons were:

- (1) they were prisoners of war
- (2) they sold themselves for food and shelter or
- (3) they became slaves because they couldn't pay a debt

Let's look at these reasons why people become slaves and see how someone with the faith of Jesus Christ is instructed to treat such situations:

- (1) Prisoners of war.

Mat 5:43 (ESV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

Mat 5:44 **But I say to you, Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you,

Israel was never told to love their enemies. That's how much higher the law of God is than the law of Moses. If we all love our enemies, there would be no war. If there is no war, there will be no prisoners of war, hence, no slaves as prisoners of war.

- (2) They sold themselves for food and shelter.

Jas 2:15 (CEV) If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food,

Jas 2:16 you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help?

Jas 2:17 Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!

The faith of Jesus Christ compels us to help people in need without requiring them to work for us as slaves.

- (3) They became slaves because they couldn't pay a debt.

Luk 6:34 (CEV) If you lend money only to someone you think will pay you back, will God be pleased with you for that? Even sinners lend to sinners because they think they will get it all back.

Luk 6:35 But love your enemies and be good to them. Lend without expecting to be paid back. Then you will get a great reward, and you will be the true children of God in heaven. He is good even to people who are unthankful and cruel.

No one in the Old Testament was given the faith of Jesus Christ, so not even Moses or Abraham or Noah will be in the first resurrection. Israel was taught to love their neighbors as themselves. However, they were certainly not taught to love their slaves as themselves or love others more than themselves.

Mat 25:34 (ESV) Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

Mat 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

Mat 25:36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

Mat 25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?'

Mat 25:38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?'

Mat 25:39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

Mat 25:40 And the King will answer them, '**Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.**'