

Moses – part 23

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth
by Victor Torres

We saw how severe the punishment for rebelling against our parents in the time of Moses. God told Israel that if a child continues to rebel, even after he was disciplined, he should be put to death by stoning. A lot of people criticize the Bible for things like this and say that the God of the Bible is merciless. That's because these people don't know that God will eventually save everyone, including these rebellious children who were put to death.

Psa 103:2 (ERV) My soul, **praise the LORD and never forget how kind he is!**

Psa 103:3 **He forgives all our sins** and heals all our sicknesses.

Psa 103:4 He saves us from the grave, and he gives us love and compassion.

Psa 103:5 He gives us plenty of good things. He makes us young again, like an eagle that grows new feathers.

Joh 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God. **He takes away the sins of the world!**

Does the Bible really say those things? Does He really forgive all our sins? Does He really take away the sins of the world? Well, the Bible really say those things, despite what the false churches of this world teach.

Knowing these things though should not make us miss the point of these judgments which the Lord has given Israel.

Exo 21:1 (MKJV) **And these *are* the judgments** which you shall set before them.

Deu 21:21 (ESV) Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. **So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.**

Judgment is used for setting wrong things right. Deuteronomy 21:21 tells us the purposes of God's judgments:

- (1) "Purge the evil from your midst", in other words, to get rid of evil among God's people
- (2) "So [that] all Israel shall hear", in other words, to make them all pay attention.
- (3) And last but not the least "So [that] all Israel shall fear". If you heard so and so got stoned for rebelling against his parents, would you continue to rebel against your parents?

The child who was stoned will learn righteousness in the lake of fire, but those who witnessed the judgment would have certainly trembled in fear.

Let's continue looking at more of God's judgments:

Exo 21:18 (ERV) "Two men might argue and one might hit the other with a rock or with his fist. If the man who was hurt is not killed, the man who hurt him should not be killed.

Exo 21:19 If the man was hurt and must stay in bed for some time, the man who hurt him must support him. The man who hurt him must pay for the loss of his time. He must support him until he is completely healed.

Under the law of Moses, if a man punches another, or if he strikes him with a rock, the punishment depends on what happens to the guy who got hit. If he dies, then the guy who hits him will be put to death. But if he doesn't die, but can't work because of his injury, then they guy who hit him needs to support him until he is completely healed.

Sounds fair, right? But we who believe in Christ live under a much higher law.

Mat 5:21 (GNB) "You have heard that people were told in the past, 'Do not commit murder; anyone who does will be brought to trial.'

Mat 5:22 (HCV) But I say to you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [fool], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of gehenna fire.

1Jn 3:15 (GNB) Those who hate others are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life in them.

Under the law of the spirit, you don't even have to hit or kill someone to be guilty of murder. The minute you hate someone, you are guilty of murder. Think about that, kids, when you are tempted by the devil to hate someone, even to hate your parents.

Exo 21:20 (ERV) "Sometimes people beat their slaves. If the slave dies after being beaten, the killer must be punished.

Exo 21:21 But if the slave gets up after a few days, then the master will not be punished. That is because someone paid their money for the slave, and the slave belongs to them.

The judgment above is another example of why some people hate the Bible. They say the Bible promotes slavery and tolerates the beating of slaves. But we saw in an earlier study that if we live under the law of the spirit, the law given through Christ, then there would not be any slaves in the first place.

The law above concerning the punishment of a master beating up his slave to death is certainly better than this law in Virginia in the 1700s (taken from Wikipedia):

Virginia, 1705– "If any slave resists his master... correcting such a slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction... the master shall be free of all punishment... as if such accident never happened."

But that law given through Moses pales in comparison to a much higher law that forbids us of even hating others.

Let's look at the other judgments given by the Lord:

[Exo 21:22 \(MKJV\)](#) If men strive and strike a pregnant woman, so that her child comes out, and there is no injury, he shall surely be punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him. And he shall pay as the judges say

If a pregnant woman had a miscarriage as a result of getting accidentally hit by men fighting, but "there is no injury" to the woman herself, then the husband will set the punishment.

This law is sadly being pointed out by people who say abortion is not murder because the guy who caused the miscarriage was not deemed guilty of murder. But two things are being missed by these people. One, the miscarriage was not intentional. And two, the husband is given the right to set the punishment for those who caused the miscarriage. Any husband who lost a child will surely bring a steep penalty for the one who is guilty.

Here is how God sees unborn children:

[Gen 25:21 \(ESV\)](#) And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, **and Rebekah his wife conceived.**

[Gen 25:22](#) **The children struggled together within her,** and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

[Gen 25:23](#) And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger."

An unborn fetus is already a child in the eyes of God. It doesn't matter in what stage of development that child is. God has already written what the life of that child would be. If you killed that unborn child, you are guilty of murder.

Going back to the pregnant woman accidentally getting injured:

Exo 21:22 (MKJV) If men strive and strike a pregnant woman, so that her child comes out, and there is no injury, he shall surely be punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him. And he shall pay as the judges say

Exo 21:23 And if *any* injury occurs, **then you shall give life for life,**

Exo 21:24 **eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,**

Exo 21:25 burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Besides the injury of losing her child, if any other injury is caused to the mother, it will be paid for in kind. If she lost a foot, the guy who caused it shall also lose a foot. If she dies, the guy also dies. This will make you cringe if you think about it, but it must have caused the men of Israel to be careful around pregnant women.

What can we take away out of this spiritually? Remember how a punished child is likened to a rebellious member of the body of Christ who would not listen to his parents? It is the same symbol. The guy getting punished here is the guy who caused the loss of the baby. In these verses which we are reading, the guy is in a fight when he caused the miscarriage. In the New Testament, we see these verses:

Rom 14:1 (KJV) Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

Let's look at other translations of this verse to see what "doubtful disputations" mean.

Rom 14:1 (ESV) As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, **but not to quarrel over opinions.**

Rom 14:1 (GNB) Welcome those who are weak in faith, **but do not argue with them about their personal opinions.**

So when one "who is weak in the faith", has a different understanding about the word of God than those who are strong in the faith, they can discuss it with the elders. But if the elders has already given the mature understanding of the Word, there is no point in continuing the argument.

There are times that those “who are weak in the faith” keeps on arguing despite warnings from the elders to stop, so the church had to put this member out of the body. As a result of this spiritual fight, some other members are offended and they also leave the body. These other lost members are symbolized by the lost baby caused by fighting men.

This member who was put out of the body and also caused others to leave the church (even though unintentionally) will have to answer to the spiritual husband of the church, Jesus Christ.

Pro 6:16 (ISV) Here are six things that the LORD hates—seven, in fact, are detestable to him:

Pro 6:17 Arrogant eyes, a lying tongue and hands shedding innocent blood;

Pro 6:18 a heart crafting evil plans, feet running swiftly to wickedness,

Pro 6:19 a false witness snorting lies, **and someone sowing quarrels between brothers.**

Just like the men of Israel being careful around pregnant women, we must also be careful in how we behave in the house of God, the church of the living God:

1Ti 3:14 (MKJV) **I write these things to you**, hoping to come to you shortly.

1Ti 3:15 But if I should delay, **that you may know how you ought to behave in the house of God**, which is *the* church of the living God, *the* pillar and foundation of the truth.

Remember the “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” rule we saw earlier? It doesn't only apply to pregnant women, it also apply to everyone.

Lev 24:17 (GNB) "Any who commit murder shall be put to death,

Lev 24:18 and any who kill an animal belonging to someone else must replace it. The principle is a life for a life.

Lev 24:19 "If any of you injure another person, whatever you have done shall be done to you.

Lev 24:20 If you break a bone, one of your bones shall be broken; if you put out an eye, one of your eyes shall be put out; if you knock out a tooth, one of your teeth shall be knocked out. Whatever injury you cause another person shall be done to you in return.

Lev 24:21 Whoever kills an animal shall replace it, but whoever kills a human being shall be put to death.

Lev 24:22 **This law applies to all of you, to Israelites and to foreigners living among you, because I am the LORD your God."**

But there is a group of people to which this law of "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" does not apply:

Exo 21:26 (CEV) If you hit one of your slaves and cause the loss of an eye, the slave must be set free.

Exo 21:27 The same law applies if you knock out a slave's tooth--the slave goes free.

If a master causes a slave to lose an eye, he doesn't lose an eye, but he must set the slave free. In the New Testament, our Lord told His followers that they are also not under this "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth" law.

Mat 5:38 (GNB) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

Mat 5:39 But now I tell you: **do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too.**

Mat 5:40 And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well.

Mat 5:41 And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles.

Mat 5:42 When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him.

We must have the humble mind of a slave. Our true master is Jesus Christ, and He "did not come to be served, but to serve".

Mat 20:20 (GNB) Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus with her two sons, bowed before him, and asked him for a favor.

Mat 20:21 "What do you want?" Jesus asked her. She answered, "Promise me that these two sons of mine will sit at your right and your left when you are King."

Mat 20:22 "You don't know what you are asking for," Jesus answered the sons. "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I am about to drink?" "We can," they answered.

Mat 20:23 "You will indeed drink from my cup," Jesus told them, "but I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. These places belong to those for whom my Father has prepared them."

Mat 20:24 When the other ten disciples heard about this, they became angry with the two brothers.

Mat 20:25 So Jesus called them all together and said, "You know that the rulers of the heathen have power over them, and the leaders have complete authority.

Mat 20:26 **This, however, is not the way it shall be among you.** If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of the rest;

Mat 20:27 and if one of you wants to be first, you must be the slave of the others---

Mat 20:28 **like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people."**