

## Lesson 8 Exodus Chapters 20-23

### PART A: EXODUS 20 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

#### FIRST READING: EXODUS 20

A1. a. What do you think the commandment in v.3 meant to a person living in the ancient world?

b. What does this commandment mean to you today?

A2. We are not to *use* any object in worship to represent or take the place of God. Eastern religions still rely heavily upon man-made objects and statues. Western culture doesn't go in for graven images, but we do have "images." What media images in our world threaten to turn the hearts of people from true worship by taking the place of God?

A3. Verse 5 says "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Why does He care so much that His children not falter in their loyalty to Him—i.e., what does this mean to you?

A4. Many contemporary Christians believe that the Sabbath is a "ceremonial law" like the various Jewish feast days, now fulfilled in Christ, and no longer binding on Christians.

a) How could you use Genesis 2:1-3 to make a case for the Sabbath day as one of the fundamental principles God intends for all men at all times.

c) What are some ways that your Sabbath observance could honor God as the Creator?

A5. The commandment to honor father and mother is the first commandment with a promise.

a) What is the promise attached to this commandment? See Deut. 5:16 for an additional promise.

b) Why do you think God commands honor for father and mother, no matter what sort of people they are? What effect would keeping this commandment have on both child and parent?

A6. The sixth commandment is commonly rendered "Thou shalt not kill." But the Hebrew word translated "kill" in this verse is the verb *ratsach*, which means to murder. Another verb meaning simply *kill* is the Hebrew *harag*. In Psalm 78:47 the hail *harag-s* the vines, but of course, hail doesn't murder. What are some times when you think killing (*harag*) is justified by God? Give scriptural examples if you can.

A7. The Doctrine & Covenants in Sec. 59:6 says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery...nor do anything like unto it." This addendum makes sense, because typically before actual adultery, something "like unto it" comes first. What kinds of rationalizations do people make that put them on the slippery slope to adultery.

A8. Can you think of ways one could steal, that do not involve taking physical property but nevertheless, involve taking something of value from another without payment?

A9. If you hear something untrue about a third person, are you guilty of "bearing false witness" if you remain silent? \_\_\_\_\_ Can you think of some other subtle ways we can break this commandment?

A10. Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have." What other sins can you think of that flow from covetousness?

A11. Verse 20 is very interesting. Moses says "Fear not...that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." The people are to fear God in one way, but not in another.

a) What kind of fear do you think Moses was telling the people *not* to have?

b) What kind of fear did Moses hope they *would* have?

A12. Did you learn anything new about the Ten Commandments while doing this study?

## **PART B: EXODUS 21-23 INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES & PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY**

### **FIRST READING: EXODUS 21 INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES**

B1. The Bible's enemies accuse it of supporting slavery. Slavery was ubiquitous in every culture of the ancient world. Mosaic Law strikingly limited its practice by Israelites, and it served an important societal economic purpose, providing for the poor through debt servitude, at the same time it also began the moral teaching process that eventually diminished slavery worldwide. Moses' law was the first to give *any* rights at all to slaves or bond servants. Find at least one thing that shows *God's work of engineering progress into human society and institutions through these laws*. Look in verses 1-11, 16, 20 and 26-27.

B2. Slavery as we experienced it in our country's early history, whereby Africans were kidnapped and sold to work as slaves indefinitely, was a sin punishable by what penalty? Cite verse.

B3. Verse 24 is the famous "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" principle, called Lex Talionis, or the law of retribution. It is not a brutal law as sometimes portrayed, but rather a great advance in human justice, for it put limits on the natural human desire for revenge. It's another way of saying the punishment must fit the crime and not go further into cruelty. Laws about personal injury were to be administered by magistrates who, in actual practice, prescribed financial restitution rather than cutting up the guilty. For example:

a) If a slave's master causes the loss of an eye or a tooth, what is the result, by law? (vs.26-27)

b) If "an eye for an eye" were administered literally, what would be done to the master?

#### **SECOND READING: EXODUS 22 MORE "CASE LAW" FOR JUDGES**

B4. You will notice that there is no "prison time" for a criminal. What punishment does a thief receive that both punishes him and deters him from repeating his crime? Cite verses.

B.5 a) If a man seduced a young woman who was single and unengaged, what was the legal consequence to them both? (vs.16-17)

b) What would be the likely result of these consequences on the morals of a society?

B6. What commands show God's love and concern for weak members of the society?

#### **THIRD READING: EXODUS 23 MORE PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY**

B7. Verse 2 enjoins against following a mob to do evil, or being party to a lawsuit that subverts justice. Why do you think these practices are dangerous to civil society?

B8. Verses 3, 6 and 8, when taken together, show an important quality of justice, properly administered. It is supposed to be "blind." How do these verses show that?

B9. Describe what would happen in the "sabbatical" or seventh year? Who would benefit?

B10. The Lord is sending his people into a land filled with enemy nations. What promises does the Lord make to Israel concerning these enemy nations and their own future?

B11. a) The greater threat to Israel is not their enemies from without, but the enemy within. What dangerous sin does the Lord warn Israel against in three different places in this chapter? Cite verses.

b) Is there a way in which we should implement the command of verse 13 in our lives today?

B12. CHALLENGE QUESTION: Verses 14-17 tell the three Jewish feast days on which a Jewish man was obligated to “appear before the Lord.” List these festivals by the names given in verses 14-16.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_

The more common names of these festivals are, in no particular order, a) Pentecost b) Passover and c) Succoth, or the Feast of Booths. Can you match them up?

B13. How have these chapters reinforced your faith in the Bible as God’s word?