

Part 1 - More Judgments: Carelessness, Theft, Borrowing

In the last chapter we covered judgments pertaining to servitude, murder, treatment of parents, kidnapping, fighting (violence), servant abuse and personal responsibility concerning animals harming humans (or animals) as well as carelessness. We will learn much more about God's laws (judgements) concerning carelessness, oppression and personal responsibility but this chapter covers many other areas too. So, this chapter will be another important chapter in learning about 'the way' of our Heavenly Father...

Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
Ps 119:33

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
John 14:6

God's Word often speaks about 'THE Way' of His Law, statutes, judgments and commandments (Ps 119 especially). This is referencing the righteous way God's Law points us to (teaches us to obey). We must remember that God's Law does not (and really cannot) give us judgments for *every single situation* that comes up in life. Instead, it gives us 'the way', which is done by setting forth basic principles (in the great Ten Commandments) and then giving us examples of how to apply those principles in all aspects of life. So basically, these judgments in Exodus 21-23 are *explaining* what the Ten Commandments *mean* (how to obey them). Since there's an unlimited number of situations that arise in life, each case needs to be judged individually and according to God's Word. The precious blood of Jesus Christ did not do away with God's Laws but it did fulfill the blood sacrifices of the Law (Heb 10:10). This means that, to find forgiveness with God, we must believe in Jesus Christ, repent from our sins and strive to change our ways (sincerely). However, this does not mean the government isn't still require (by God) to enforce God's Laws nor that we shouldn't try to obey them. Quite to the contrary, Christian principles should be in *any* government worldwide (any nation) that wants to be blessed by God. The fact that governments of the world have effectively kicked out God's Law (in practice if not even in the laws themselves) is the reason why there is so much oppression, injustice and unrest in the world. Further, our governments can only do so much to enforce justice because when a citizenry has a rebellious heart to God, there will never be any peace. Thus, all of God's laws are truly spiritual in nature (Rom 7:14), meaning that they can only truly be kept *from the heart*. That's why we're told to 'love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength' and to 'love each other as ourself' are the two basic principles that all of God's Law rests upon (Mth 22:37-40). In other words, God is explaining what the Ten Commandments mean by giving us examples so we can see (grasp) what they mean, as well as the punishments for them. With this in mind, let's get started looking at this next great chapter in Exodus for it has many more precious judgments that give us insight into wisdom and understanding that is far beyond all other things in value...

5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

*9 **Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life:** but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;*

Deut 4:5-9

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

*14 For **the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.***

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Prov 3:13-18

Exodus 22

*1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore **five** oxen for an ox, and **four** sheep for a sheep.*

This verse tells us that the punishment for theft that cannot be recovered (because the animal is either dead or sold) is four to five times the value of the animal. Remember, animals were money in those days as well as transportation. This statute lays out the principle that, the greater the value of the theft the more restitution had to be made. An ox is much larger than a sheep and usually required more money to purchase it. So, the restitution has to match the value of the goods. This makes stealing *very* unprofitable, especially if you could not pay the restitution because the law requires you to be sold into involuntary slavery, as we'll see in a couple verses (this is the only kind of *involuntary* slavery God's Law permits). And to run away from slavery when working out one's debt meant they were an incorrigible criminal and liable to death!

Exodus 22

2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.

The words 'breaking up' is a Hebrew figure of speech (Hebraism) that means to be 'caught in the act', as we would say in English. So, if the thief is caught in the act of stealing and the home

owner (or anyone else defending the home, barn, shed or pastures) kills the thief, then they are not to be punished. This shows us we have a right to protect our homes, even if it's just against theft and even if no bodily harm to us or our family is threatened *and* even if the thief is unarmed. The thief willingly forfeits his life when he tries to steal another person's belongings. This is according to God's Word and *should* be still abided by in our governments.

But sadly, national and local laws do not always permit this so you should make sure you know what the laws of your country and local laws are; otherwise, you'll end up being punished (whether it's right in God's eyes or not). Note, this is basically what Romans 13 tells us. Paul advised people to try to obey the governments and not to be rebellious because most governments are put in place to 'keep the peace'. We should be very leery of going out and 'protesting' (and especially not engage in any violence or looting) simply because protests all too often turn violent (many times provocateurs are inserted into them). How then can we make an impact? First off, *clean your own heart* (Mth 7) and then work to plant seeds of truth to help others come to Jesus Christ. A government only becomes corrupt *because the citizenry does*. It's a cause and effect. If the majority of the people are righteous, God will help them throw off tyranny. The United States is a perfect example of that. The Declaration of Independence proves the colonies were not trying to be rebellious but that the British government was being tyrannical *and would not allow them to obey God*. So, God blessed their fight for independence because they placed HIS Laws as the foundation for their lives and their new government (state and national). Any 'revolution' not based upon going back to God's Laws in the government *will fail*.

So, as the people become corrupt, *so does the government*. But not every individual is corrupt in society so some find themselves trying to obey God in a nation whose laws contradict God's Laws. Thus, it's not always possible to obey your government when they try to force you to do something that goes against God's Word. In such cases, you simply you have to refuse to obey (or cooperate). Some call this 'non-compliance'. You'll probably still get punished by the government when disobeying them (non-complying) but as *Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men* (Acts 5:29). 2 Tim 3:12 also tells us that *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*. 1 Pt 4:1-2 and Phil 2:5-8 also warn us that obeying God's Word is likely going to bring persecutions in the flesh and advises us how to handle it. Jesus too warned of this (Mth 5:10-12, John 15:20).

But it's important to understand the difference between obeying God's Word and being a trouble maker for God's Word specifically instructs us not to be rebel rousers or trouble makers. God expects more from us than that. We are to *try* to obey our government no matter where we live but we must also know God's Word well enough to know when laws overstep the boundary between right and wrong (try to get you to break God's Laws). After all, this is what the 'One World Order' of Satan (the antichrist) is going to do in making everyone accept and worship the beastly governmental system (which is simply Satan's wicked government). You cannot obey the government at that time *because it's evil*; the laws will be evil and God expects you not to participate in it. So, we all have a duty to learn God's Word (2 Tim 2:15) so we know when the government crosses the line of moral righteousness to moral corruption. But, to reiterate, we

must try to obey all laws so long as they don't go against God's Word. Paul summed it up well in Rom 12:18 when he said: *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

Exodus 21

3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

The Companion Bible has a note that states the portion of this verse that says '*If the sun be risen upon him*' means 'if the thief is killed after he got away'. In other words, if the thief is not killed while 'caught in the act' then it's likely he was killed in 'cold blood', meaning there was not enough evidence for someone to kill him (or her). So, we see that the right to protect our home does not extend out of the boundary of our property. We don't have a right to go out on our own and shoot whoever we think the perpetrator was. Most towns have law enforcement who are supposed to make an honest investigation to find the perpetrator and then courts to give them a fair trial. *The fact that there is much corruption in these institutions still does not give us the right to go out and seek 'justice' on our own.* Never forget that God claims the right to vengeance (Deut 32:35, Heb 10:30) and has delegated justice to the governments of the world, not to individuals. Why? Well, all too often emotions cloud our vision making individuals unable execute righteous judgment. In other words, they won't get the real criminal; they'll find someone they don't like and harm them thinking they 'had' to be the one who stole from them. We simply don't make good judges when we are too emotionally involved. That's why courts are set up; they are supposed to give impartial judgment. That's also why judges have the right to recuse themselves from a trial. They would not be able to judge fairly if one's own son or daughter was on trial or if they are heavily invested monetarily with the corporation that is on trial. *Conflicts of interests always pervert justice.* That's why God delegated judgments to the courts (judges) and not to individuals to do as they please (Deut 12:8, Prov 12:15, 16:2, 21:2).

We also see this verse states that if a thief cannot make *full* restitution, then he (or she) is supposed to be sold for his (or her) theft. Again, we see this is the only time *forced* slavery is allowed in God's Word and the reason is that this is the only way the victim can be properly given justice. When sold, the victim would instantly be paid back; they would not have to wait years to get full restitution. This is just and fair. Further, the length of time the thief would have to work as a slave would depend on the value of what he sold as well as his reputation. If he was a poor worker, it would take longer to repay the debt to his 'master' who paid his full restitution. But, if it was someone with a fairly good reputation who stole to feed his family, it's much more likely someone would have compassion on him and not make him work as long. Do you see the wisdom in this statute? Today we send thousands of thieves to jail, which does nothing for justice. Not only does it take a long time for the victim to get restitution (if it ever happens) but then, all of society is forced to financially support the criminal. Moreover, the criminal is then forced to be around more criminals who are often worse than he (or she) is and they certainly are not at all 'rehabilitated'. Our criminal 'justice' system is a joke. It does not give justice to victims nor does it prevent crimes. Instead, it breeds more criminals and our crooked governments apparently like to have it so. But don't worry. This is something that grieves and angers God

immensely. Deut 32:4 tells us that He is a God of ‘judgment’, which means *righteous* judgment. In other words, *He loves justice*. So much so that He even used a beautiful analogy in Isa 49:14-26 to explain to Zion (symbolic of God’s center of domain or governmental control) how He has not forgotten about justice. He goes on to say that He loves justice more than a mother loves her baby! He also uses the analogy of graving justice upon His hands to explain how engrained justice (righteous judgment) is in His very way of life and thinking. In other words, He constantly thinks of justice for His children. [Study this great chapter in Isaiah 49 with the following link: https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Isaiah/1202]. We should never forget how much our Heavenly Father loves His children. Justice is thus very dear to His heart. He has made this so very clear in His Word...

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Prov 21:3

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.
Ezek 45:9

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

Amos 5:14-15

8 O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.

14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

Ps 89:8-15

What this means is that *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister (Heb*

6:10). *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom 14:17).*

Exodus 22

4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

We're now given a stipulation in the laws regarding restitution: if the goods that were stolen have not been sold, killed or harmed in any way, and are still in the possession of the thief, then the restoration is much less and does not depend on the value of possession stolen. So, we see that *there is a greater punishment if the original goods cannot be restored*. This is fair and certainly would give incentive for someone who actually had a conscience to repent and turn himself (or herself) in to authorities after they stole the goods. Or, if a search was being made, they would be more likely to cooperate with authorities if they knew the punishment was less, again, showing repentance is a likely option in the case of theft. Notice though, that regardless if the thief repented or not, they still had to pay double. *The Law of God still requires it, even after Jesus Christ died for our sins*. When Jesus converted Matthew (Zacchaeus) the tax collector, he promised to give half his goods to the poor and restore fourfold to anyone who he stole from through false accusations (which was common in tax collectors at that time). And to this Jesus said: *This day is salvation come to this house* (Luke 19:8-9). Note very carefully how it was only because Zacchaeus promised to change his actions (showing fruits of repentance, Lk 3:8, Heb 6:1) that Jesus said salvation came to his house. So, we see that Jesus Himself did not do away with the laws of restitution – He confirmed them! And Paul (who the Holy Spirit used to write half the New Testament) confirms this as well in his admonishment to those who repented of their theft...

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Eph 4:28

If restitution is not possible (say you don't know where the person is that you stole from) then we are to work to help other that are in need. This might mean with physical goods (food, money, etc.) but it could be also with spiritual truth, support, etc. Naturally, this is something a Christian is supposed to do anyways, but for prior thieves it is especially so because their restitution should also include helping others *beyond what is expected*. Of course, this has to be done with discernment and wisdom [**Isn't It Okay to Help?** <https://t.me/BibleStudyDownload/292>] because there are some people where 'helping' isn't really helping. Some people (like drug addicts and alcoholics) can actually be harmed if you are trying to 'help' them, so we must learn to use wisdom and good judgment (discernment) in all things for *a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment* (Eccl 8:5).

Exodus 22

5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

The Companion Bible has a note that states the latter part of this verse should have been rendered: “*he shall surely make restitution out of his own field according to the yield thereof; and if the whole field be eaten*”. There was apparently a copyist error. The original Hebrew gives more details, which are helpful in determining the judgments.

God’s Law is very thorough: through the statutes and judgment, God tells us how to deal with the different forms of crimes because *the Ten Commandments can be broken in many different ways*. This judgment covers another form of theft where a man steals from another man’s field or vineyard (could be any crop, these are just examples) by opening the gate of his neighbor’s field and moving his cattle (animals of any kind) into the field to eat. *This is theft* and it was to be punished, not monetarily, but by giving the very best of his own fields to the one he stole from *and* it depending upon how much of his neighbor’s field had been eaten. In grains, the very best was used for seed. So, this was going to set the farmer back quite a bit in the quality of his crops for years to come. And for vines, the best grapes got the best price (usually were used for expensive wines) so this too would cost the thief dearly. By giving the best of his field or vineyard (and again, this would apply to any crop) then restitution is made because the best is given. Notice the victim could do whatever he wanted with the ‘best’ of the grain (or whatever crop) given. He can sell it, feed it or use it as seed wheat for his field. The judgment simply says he had to be given the best and it was to be equal in amount as to what was taken from his own field. Money was not to be used as restoration in this case as the price of sale fluctuates from year to year. Having to give the best of your own crop is thus a *very* good incentive not to steal your neighbors’ crops.

Notice how all of God’s Laws (and the judgments thereof) are designed to punish the criminals and reward the righteous and give justice to those who are afflicted regardless of their status in life? Even those who don’t have any power or influence in society are supposed to get justice. There should never be two tiers of justice in society, although that’s exactly what happens when we cast God’s Laws out of our government, society and hearts. Is it any wonder why there are so many problems and injustice in the world today?

*1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:
3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.
4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for **all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**
5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.*
Deut 32:1-5

15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.
Deut 32:15-18

Exodus 22

6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

This was another form of theft, even if it was just from carelessness. Again, we see how God values responsibility. Even if it was an accident, restitution had to be made. Negligence and carelessness are not excuses to thwart justice (nor is stupidity). If you cause harm to another person, or their property, you had to ‘make it good’, which is what restitution does. Restitution, by the way, is a Hebrew word that means *to be safe* (in mind, body or estate); figuratively, *to be* (causatively, make) *completed*; by implication, *to be friendly*; by extension, *to reciprocate* (in various applications) (#7999) [interestingly, it’s actually the same root word for a word often translated as ‘perfect’ (#8003), such as in 1 Kings 8:61, 11:4, 15:3, 20:3]. **The laws of restitution are meant to keep people safe.** Actually, *all* of God’s laws are designed to keep us safe from those who would do us harm. This is why it’s written...

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

*10 **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.***

Rom 13:8-10

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Gal 5:13-18

Verse 18 doesn't mean that, when we are led of the Holy Spirit, we don't have to obey God's Law but rather, *it means we won't disobey God's Laws because we obey them from the heart.* Paul explained further in the book of Timothy...

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

*9 Knowing this, **that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,***

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

1 Tim 1:8-10

God gave us His Law for our good (Deut 10:13); it will keep us safe if we simply obey it!

Exodus 22

7 If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double.

The next few verses deal with a judgment that is very revealing as they show us how much value God puts on responsibility and keeping our word. If we agree to care for and protect something for someone, we should take care of it *as if it were our own... if not better*. This, of course, goes 'hand in hand' with *the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (James 2:8). If we really love our neighbor, we'll help them out and protect them and their property. And, if they need something protected (money or 'stuff' is the example given here) we are *duty bound to God* to take care of it *as if it were our own*. Say, for example, they had to be away for work for a few weeks or they were going on vacation and they had some valuable coins they wanted you to protect. You would be responsible to protect them as if they were your own. You must do all you can to protect what was given to you to protect. But if a thief was somehow able to come in and steal the goods, without your knowledge, (which could happen) then the thief (if found) was to restore double of what was stolen (or the equivalent monetary value of).

Exodus 22

8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods.

If the thief could not be found, the head of the household was the next suspect (rightly so) and a diligent search was to be made to see if he indeed stole the goods. This would automatically give him impetus to try and help find the thief (even if it was someone within his own household), as well as to make sure goods in his home were never stolen in the first place. Again, God highly values personal responsibility and honesty. He expects us to keep our word. If we say we'll keep (guard and protect) someone's belongings, we should do so.

33 *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*
34 *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*
35 *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*
36 *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*
37 *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: **for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.***
Matt 5:33-37

James repeats this in chapter five when he states...

*But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but **let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay;** lest ye fall into condemnation.*
James 5:12

Our word should be ‘as good as gold’ when we represent Jesus Christ. He expects us to reflect His Light *for the spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly* (Prov 20:27). Moreover, Jesus said...

14 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
15 *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*
Matt 5:14-16

Exodus 22

9 *For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or **for any manner of lost thing**, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.*

This judgment concerns all manner of ‘trespass’, which means actually means *a revolt* (national, moral or religious) (#6588). It comes from the prim root #6586, which means: *to break away (from just authority)*, i.e. *trespass, apostatize, quarrel*. So, in ‘all manner of trespass’ where one person challenges another thing to be his own (claiming another person stole something of his) then both ‘parties’ (this word is actually not in the original manuscripts [#9999] but was added to help the understanding of the verse) were to come to a judge and allow him to judge between the two to see who was telling the truth. The guilty party was to pay double to his neighbor. This judgment concerns ‘any manner of lost thing’, so anything that you lost and you think your ‘neighbor’ stole (which simply means another person), then you had the right to take him or her to court over it. This could happen in many ways and could be as simple as someone grabbing your coat, wallet or purse at a public gathering; it applies to all sorts of situations. If the judge

found that they indeed had stolen from you then they must pay *double* what they stole from you as punishment. But if you were false witnessing against them then *you* must pay double. This kept both parties honest because there were repercussions (severe ones at that) not just for theft but also for falsely accusing. We often forget about the Ninth Commandment ‘thou shalt not bear false witness’ [https://t.me/BibleStudyBooks_Exodus/105] but it is a paramount commandment for justice and righteousness (and peace) to prevail.

But, remember, these judgments and statutes are *case law*. They give *examples* for the judges to learn how to righteously judge but each case must be taken (judged) on its own because each set of circumstances is different as are the people in the law suit. An excellent example of this is in 1 Kings during the reign of Solomon. Recall that God had appeared to Solomon in the early days of his reign and asked what Solomon would like from God. Now, this was God Almighty, asking Solomon *what he wanted...* oh the possibilities! But what did Solomon ask for? *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* (1 Kings 3:9). This naturally pleased God a lot; so much so that He gave Solomon more wisdom than anyone else on earth has ever had, with the exception of Jesus Christ (God) Himself. But Solomon still had to study God’s Word and His Laws. And he used God’s Laws to learn how to rightly judge for his people. This is why God blessed him so much. During the early part of Solomon’s reign, truly justice and judgment flourished. But not all cases are easy. One such case was in regarding to this judgment but it centered not upon a stolen animal or personal belongings but upon *a human life*. This judgment ‘call’ was a real ‘stumper’. Check out how the wisdom of God judged the situation...

16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26 Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

*28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; **and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.***

1 Kings 3:16-28

Is it any wonder why God's Word says that *wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding* (Prov 4:7) and *wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it* (Prov 8:11). Notice how verse 28 tells us that all of Israel 'feared' the king because they saw God had given him wisdom to judge righteously. In other words, they saw he was not going to pervert justice for any reason and he was wise enough to discern good from evil, so he would know who the criminals were and be able to punish them. Therefore, people were motivated to do what was right because they knew they couldn't buy off the king, sway him with their influence or power in the nation or deceive him. This is what it means to not have 'respect of persons' = treating all people according to God's Law and love them as yourself (Prov 24:23, Rom 2:11, 1 Pt 1:17, Lev 19:18, Mk 12:31, Rom 13:9).

So, although Solomon could not give the true mother of the babe 'double' what was stolen from her (her child), he was able to discern who the true mother of the child was simply by threatening its life (naturally he was not actually going to kill it but bringing in a sword and acting like he was going to was necessary to discern who the true mother was). Thus, he restored the child to its true mother and the false mother was shamed for being proven a liar and a thief. This shows a lot about the woman who tried to steal the child. Notice that she was not content with taking the child as her own; she literally wanted the child killed! It's an excellent type for Satan for, like the false mother of this account, Satan cares nothing for God's children. *He wants simply to see God's children die; he does not want God to have them.* He wants to use, abuse and oppress God's children for his own selfish gain and then discard them when he's done with them... which is quite obvious when you simply look at the way this world works. It is set up so that only a few at the 'top' benefit and at the expense of all the other people in the world. 'Money' is all that matters to most people; they don't care about human life at all and that's partly because Satan's system (which controls the world right now) is set up to reward the calloused, cold hearted, deceitful and the wicked while it punishes those that do right. Satan's ways thus lead to death (eventually spiritual death) while the ways of God (Jesus Christ) lead us to eternal life (Rom 6:23). This is the bottom line of the spiritual war we're in because, of course, God is like the woman who was the true mother of her child. *Her very bowels yearned for her child* and she did not want it to die. This is how God feels about His children. However, God is not willing to give His children to Satan and He will also not allow us to die spiritually. Instead, God Himself came to this earth, incarnated into flesh as Jesus Christ (John 1:1, 14), ***to die for us... so we wouldn't have to.***

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 Peter 2:21-25

The life and death of Jesus Christ shows the immense love and compassion God has for His children while His resurrection shows the strength He has to conquer Satan *and* his evil plan to take all of God's children to spiritual death with him (Heb 2:14). *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13). *We love him, because he first loved us* (1 John 4:19).

So, we see then that judgment is not usually black and white. It takes discernment and wisdom to judge rightly but we must have the basic laws and examples in order to learn how to discern right from wrong and how to judge rightly. But what Satan is very good at is using God's Law (by twisting and perverting it) to harm God's children. That is the essence of why God Himself made the ultimate sacrifice (as Jesus Christ) for His children – so *He had the right to pardon anyone who turns back to Him*. As we'll soon see in this great book of Exodus, ***only the mercy of God is 'above' God's Law*** (Ex 25:21). This means God has the right to forgive whomsoever He will (Ex 33:19). But *God gets great pleasure in giving mercy* (Hosea 6:6, Prov 16:6) because He truly doesn't want any of His children to die (Ezek 18:23, 33:11, 1 Pt 3:9).

Exodus 22

10 If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it:

11 Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good.

12 And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.

13 If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.

These verses give us more details on how to judge rightly. God gives these examples not only so we can learn to judge rightly but also because these are things that are *likely to happen*. So, if animals were given to you to take care of, and they get hurt, die or are even driven away (and cannot be found) and no one sees it, then the one responsible for protecting his neighbors' goods has to swear to God (making him directly accountable to God if he is lying) that he didn't '*put his hand unto his neighbour's goods*'. But notice the owner of the goods has to accept this oath

and be ok with taking the loss. If not, he has the right to issue an investigation and if it is found out that indeed his animals were stolen (and remember animals were a person's livelihood, a form of money and transportation so this judgment has broad applications for even today) then the offending party would have to pay restitution, which was outlined earlier in this chapter. If, however, the animal was 'torn in pieces' (meaning it had been torn into by an animal) then it was something that was out of the hands of he who was keeping the animal. Wild animals sometimes attack cattle and it's not always preventable.

Exodus 22

14 And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good.

15 But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.

These judgments concern hiring out versus borrowing. If you ask to borrow something from your 'neighbor' (which simply means another person) then God expects you to take care of it when using it. If, for example, you borrow someone's mower, don't break it and not fix it or replace it with something just as good, if not better. Or if, for another example, you borrow someone's food processor, don't break it without fixing it or buying them a new one equivalent (if not better). This is just common sense and a darn good way to keep your friends but *it's also a command from God. We don't have a right to harm that which is our neighbors even if we are borrowing it.* This certainly would apply to those who we are working for as well. Treat the tools and materials you're working with well. Don't get mad and break them or sabotage a project. Simply treat others and their belongings as you would like to be treated. *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well* (James 2:8). However, if you hire out a project (like mowing your lawn), you are not obliged to fix anything they are using to do the job. Their price should include the maintenance needed along with any other costs like fuel, etc. This too is common sense and is actually abided by (usually), although price gouging (in America at least) has become common price because our monetary system is so unsound and inflation has been running rampant.

What this 'series of judgments' on personal responsibility also reveals to us goes deeper than just the physical realm, for our Heavenly Father also expects us to protect what He gives us: ***the truth***. Moses warned us we must guard our heart (Deut 4:9, 11:16) to keep the truth from being stolen from us. The parable of the sower (Mth 13) warns us that indeed, Satan can (and will) steal the truth out of our heart *if we let him*. So, it's up to us to guard our heart (carnal mind) and mind to protect the truth God gives us. Scriptures (Prov 30:5-6, Rev 22:18) also tells us we must guard against the Word of God being twisted or perverted (another way truth is stolen from us). Moreover, Matt 25:29 warns: *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. We'll lose the truth if we don't share it.* (As the saying goes: 'use it or lose it'!) This is the essence of the parable of the talents tells us in Mth 25:14-30 - God also expects us to use the talents (gifts) He has given us to help others return to our Heavenly Father: we are to help all we can in God's

grand plan of ‘restoration’... how? ***We are to help restore people’s faith in God (and His Son, Jesus Christ)***! This is the ultimate lesson on restoration and truly, *it’s the most important* because it is what all of life hinges on: faith in God. This is why Paul stated that *whatsoever is not of faith is sin* (Rom 14:23). Helping to restore faith in God for His wayward children is our purpose in life! [**The Duty of God's Priesthood** -<https://t.me/BibleStudyTruth/96>].

So, we see again what these judgments reveal: the righteousness of God. Remember, Jesus didn’t say we should *never* judge but that we should do so only *after* we’d cleaned our own heart out so *we could see clearly to help others*, not so we could be their judge and executor (Mth 7:1-5). Jesus expressly said we should judge ‘*righteous judgment*’ (John 7:24). God’s judgments are given to bring justice because justice brings peace *and life*. God’s ‘way’ is often referred to in the Bible as “THE Way” because each case must be judged on a case-by-case basis because each situation is different and has different factors that need to be considered. Life is just like that. Likewise, in our everyday life, we must make hundreds of decisions every day. This is a form of judgment we usually call discernment yet truly when you made a decision, you are making a judgment and this is not bad. We *have* to make decisions. And still today, someone who shows wisdom in their decision making is said to have ‘good judgment’ and this is not at all condemned but rather, is still considered a valuable characteristic in life. Truly, when we learn how to think and rationalize the way our Heavenly Father does, we will begin to enjoy the blessings that come from obeying Him, because studying His Word and obeying Him *changes who we are for the better* so that we do things that bring blessings. **The way you ‘claim’ the promises of God (written in His Word) is by obeying His Word.** This is why it is written...

1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

Ps 119:1-2

In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

Prov 12:28

Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

Prov 13:6

AMEN.