
Day 60 – March 1

The Laws of Moses (1450 – 1400 BCE)

Personal Rights and Remedies

Restitution of Loss Seduction

Injuries and Damages

Masters and Servants

Credit, Interest and Collateral

Contracts and Agreements

Weights and Measures

Inheritance

Right of Firstborn

Levirate Marriage

Case of Zelophehad's Daughters

Readings: Exodus 21:1-11, 26-36; 22:5-17, 22-25; Leviticus 19:11-13, 35-37; 24:18, 21; 25:44-46; Numbers 5:5-10; 27:1-11; 30:1-16; 36:1-13; Deuteronomy 15:1-18; 21:15-17; 22:8; 23:15-16, 19-20; 24:6, 10-15, 17; 25:5-10, 13-16

Reflections:

- In this section we see more insight into the concept of restitution. Interesting how in Numbers the principle of restitution seems to give a person the same amount back and then add twenty percent. In Exodus it appears to follow the principle of giving double back in return. Apparently the judges decided what was fair.
- Here is an interesting verse to consider: “When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord (see the connection between the set of five commands and the second set of five) that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for the wrong, add one fifth to it and give it to the person he has wronged.” (Numbers 5:6-7)
- The section on seduction of virgins is again in the interest of protecting the woman’s rights.

- Obviously dangerous bulls were a problem in ancient Israel.
- The passages concerning the poor servant again show God's heart for the needy and vulnerable. Slaves are clearly property which again makes me glad for Christ. Slaves do have rights and their boundaries and so this does show a sense of justice uncommon in the ancient world.
- The practice of charging no interest is a key to sustaining prosperity. Now, these are subsistence farmers and so it is quite different today. Yet, consider the difference if there were no interest payments, only principle payments. Again, oppressing people directly impacts God. He hears their cries for justice and mercy.
- The practice of cancelling debts and not taking key items on pledge again shows the plan for all people to be financially protected.
- Deuteronomy 15:5 and 11 are interesting verses: "There should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you..." and "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." One seems to be a goal and the other recognizing an ongoing reality that will need sustained commitment. This is something good for Christ-followers to remember as they seek to live as people of compassion.
- We see more male and female distinctions in the section concerning vows. A woman could make a vow and yet her husband or father had veto power if they felt they were rash. It is like women are valued but men still hold the trump card.
- The law concerning the man with two wives, one he loves and the other he doesn't underscores again the desire to protect the innocent, that being the children of the unloved wife.
- The practice of Levirate marriage was carried on to Jesus' day and was clearly understood as a way to prevent poverty or loss of financial stability for women.
- The case of Zelophehad's daughters again shows the value of women in holding the inheritance. The seeds of the future principle of "no male no female" are witnessed in these sections where women, although not completely equal with men, are starting to be given significant rights and clearly are valued.