

- #10 Exodus 21,22,22:1-9. The Ancient Legal Code of Israel.
- I. Introductions and announcements.
- II Prayer.
- III Review: We have seen how the basic religious and ethical code of the Ten Commandments was revealed through Moses at Mt. Sinai. We assessed the place of the Ten Commandments in modern society.
- IV Overview: In the course of human life, people are going to do harm to other people or to the community, either by accident or by intent. An organized society will require a legal code in order to assess the harm, punish the wrong-doer, discourage repetition of the act and to compensate the injured.
- As early societies did not have the resources or precedent for long term imprisonment, penalties included fines, corporal punishment, exile or death. Our section today is a brief example of very specific rules and penalties in four categories: 1. Treatment of slaves. 2. Bodily injury including homicide. 3. Property damage. 4. A miscellaneous group intended to protect the vulnerable members of the community. *Fatal miscarriage not life for life but a monetary fine set by judge*
- This is an ancient code that assumes an underlying body of custom, such as bride price, the institution of slavery, and commercial exchange. It assumes a stable agricultural society organized by family and tribe.
- V Ex 21:1-11. This is a series of rules intended to humanize the institution of slavery and, to a degree, protect the rights of the slave. Nahum Sarna demonstrates the development of Jewish thought from the Exodus code, the oldest, through Dt 15:12-18, which comes from the period of the monarchy, to Lv. 25:35-46, dated about the time of the return from exile. By the time of the Leviticus section, it was forbidden to enslave a fellow Jew. By the time of Jesus, very few Jews owned slaves.
- If slavery is an evil practice, why doesn't the Bible prohibit it?
- VI 21:12-17. List the four crimes punishable by execution:
Add the three from 22:18-20:
Sarna says that you can see what a society considers most threatening by its rules for capital punishment. In Babylon, execution was most common for crimes against property. "Life was cheap, property valuable."
What crimes are punishable by capital punishment in the United States?
- VII 21:18-27. Rules concerning assault and injury to others.
23-25 is a classic statement of 'lex talionis (eye for eye). Lv 24:19,20. This is quoted and refuted by Jesus. Mt.5:38:41.
Why was 'lex talionis' an advance for human society?
What is the alternative to literal usage implied in this passage?
- VIII 21:28-32. The owner is responsible for harm caused by his animals.
Do you recall a recent case in Kansas courts that followed this principle?
- IX 21:33-22:15. Damage to property by theft or negligence. The emphasis here is compensation for loss rather than punishment.
- X 22:16-28. A group of rules designed to protect the most vulnerable members of society. The laws of Israel are unique in their insistence on identification with and protection of the stranger, widow, orphan, & impoverished.
- XI Any society that attributes its laws to God and expects its leaders to interpret and enforce them is called a theocracy. Benefits? Problems? Contemporary examples? How well is it working? Israel? Iran? Afghanistan?
- XII Next time: The Covenant accepted, C. 24, and Broken, C 32,34:1-9. Wright 8.