

## Exodus 22

God's expectations for Israel continue in this chapter. Some laws relate to theft, some relate to one's relationship with others, some relate to one's relationship to God.

### TRANSLATION - 22:1-4:

**1** If a man steals an ox or a kid and slaughters it or sells it, five cattle he will reimburse for the ox and four sheep for the kid. **2** If a breaking in the thief will be found and he is struck and he dies, there is not blood. **3** If the sun shines on him, blood to him. To reimburse he will reimburse, if there is not to him then he will be sold for his theft. **4** If to find you will find in the thief's hand, an ox or donkey or kid alive, two he will reimburse.

### HEBREW WORDS:

"To slaughter" (ver.1) is used 11 times, only here in Exodus. "Breaking in" (ver. 2) is only used here and Jer. 2:34. "Thief" is used three times in this context (only here in Exodus): 22:1, 6-7. It is used 17 times in the OT; 13 of which are in Ezekiel. "To find" was used earlier at 5:11; 9:19. "To strike" was used frequently already in Exodus, earlier at 2:11-13. "To die" was used earlier at 1:6, 16. "Blood" was used earlier at 4:9, 25-26. The word here is plural and denotes "blood guiltiness." "To shine" (ver. 3) is used 18 times; only here in Exodus. "To reimburse" or "to compensate" or "to recompense" is used extensively throughout this chapter (otherwise, it is only used in 21:34, 36-37): 22:2-6, 8, 10-14. The verb is used 116 times in the OT. It is related to the noun "peace." "To sell" was used earlier at 21:7-8, 16, 35, 37. This is its last use in Exodus. "Theft" is only used here: 22:1-2. "Bull" (ver. 4) was used earlier at 20:17. "Donkey" was used earlier at 4:20. "Kid" was used earlier at 12:3-5.

### HEBREW GRAMMAR:

The Hebrew construction that denotes emphasis is used extensively in this chapter: 22:2-3, 5, 11-13, 15-16, 18, 22, 25. It is the grammatical construction called the infinitive absolute followed by the same verb in either the perfect or imperfect form.

### COMMENTARY:

It was against the law of Moses to steal (20:15). If a man steals another man's livestock, ox or sheep (22:1), and has it slaughtered or sells it, he will pay restitution. The ox will require five ox to take its place; the sheep will require four sheep to make restitution for it. If a thief does "break into" a house and is killed in the process, the owner of the house is not guilty of blood guiltiness (ver. 2). In other words, protecting one's own home is allowed by God. He is not guilty of murder, forbidden by 20:13. On the other hand, if the time is daylight then the presumption is that the thief can be identified, even scared away so that he should not be killed (ver. 3). If he is, then the owner will be guilty of murder. The owner should be reimbursed for anything stolen; if the thief does not have any money (ver. 3-4), the thief will be sold into slavery, which was discussed in the prior chapter (21:1-6). The thief will reimburse two animals for the one stolen.

### APPLICATION:

*NT writers* - The apostle Paul will write that a man needs to provide for his family, otherwise he is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8). We believe that defense against dangerous intruders into one's home is a part of that expectation.

### TRANSLATION - 22:5-15:

**5** When a man causes to graze in a field or vineyard and he lets out his animal and it grazes in another's field, from the best of his field and from the best of his vineyard he will reimburse.

**6** When a fire will go out and it will find the bushes and there is consumed the sheaves and the grain or the field, to reimburse he will reimburse, the one who kindled the conflagration.

**7** When a man gives to his friend silver or tools to keep and they are stolen from the house of the man, if the thief is found, he will reimburse twice. **8** If he is not found, the thief, then the owner of the house will come to God, if he extended his hand in the work of his friend, **9** On every word of sin, about an ox, about a donkey, about a kid, about a mantle, about every lost item which he says that it [is] his, to God he will bring a word of both, whom He will condemn, God will send two to his friend. **10** When a man gives to his friend a donkey or an ox or a kid and every beast to protect and he dies or is injured or is stolen, there is not [someone] seeing, **11** The oath of Jehovah will be between the two, if he did not extend his hand in the work of his friend and he will take to himself and he will not reimburse. **12** But if to steal he will steal from him, he will reimburse to the owner. **13** If to be savaged it was savaged, a witness will bring the prey and he will not reimburse. **14** And when a man will ask from his friend and it is injured or dies while with him, there is not with him [the owner], to reimburse he will reimburse. **15** If while with him the owner, he will not reimburse if a hireling he is, he comes while a hireling.

#### HEBREW WORDS:

“To graze” (ver. 5) is used only here in Exodus, out of 6 uses (Jer. 10:8, 14, 21; 51:17 are the other uses). “Vineyard” is used 94 times, three times in Exodus: 22:4; 23:11. “To let out” has a wide range of meanings; it was used earlier for Moses “extending his hand.” It was used earlier at 2:5. “Animal” is only used 6 times in the OT, only here in Exodus. “The best” is only used 6 times, only here in Exodus. “Fire” (ver. 6) was used earlier at 3:2; 9:23-24. “Bushes” or “thorns” is used only here in Exodus. It is used 11 times. “Sheaves” or “stacked grain” is used only three times: Exo. 22:5; Judges 15:5; Job 5:26. “Standing grain” is used only here in Exodus. It is used 10 times. “To kindle” and “conflagration” are related words; one is the verb, the other is the noun. The verb is used extensively in Deuteronomy. It was used earlier at 3:2-3. The noun is only used here in Exodus.

“Tools” (ver. 7) has a wide range of meanings; it was used earlier at 3:22. “To keep, guard, protect” was used earlier at 10:28; 12:17, 24-25. “Thief” was used earlier at 22:6. “To draw near, approach” (ver. 8; often used in worship) was used earlier at 3:5; 12:48. “Work” was used earlier at 12:16; 20:9-10. “Friend” was used earlier at 2:13; 11:2. “God” used in this context is often understood to refer to human judges or rulers who serve in God’s place. “Sin” (ver. 9) here suggests a breach of trust. The word is used in Exodus at 22:8; 23:21; 34:7. It is used 93 times. “Mantle” is a garment worn on the outside of other garments. It is used 16 times; in Exodus at 22:8, 25. “Lost item” is only used here in Exodus, out of 4 times. “To condemn” is used only here in Exodus. It is used 35 times. “To injure” (ver. 10) was used earlier at 9:25. “To steal” is used only here in Exodus. It is used 47 times. “One seeing” is used only here in Exodus. It is used 11 times and can refer to a “seer” or “prophet.”

“Oath” (ver. 11) is only used here in Exodus. It is used 30 times in the OT. “Owner” (ver. 12) was used earlier at 21:3, 22, 28-29, 34, 36. It can be translated as “husband” or “Baal,” the god of the Sidonians. “To be savaged” is used only here in Exodus. It was used in Genesis at 37:33; 44:28; 49:27. The verb is used 25 times in the OT. It is related to the noun “prey” in the same verse; the noun is used 22 times. “Witness” was used earlier at 20:16. “Hireling” (ver. 15) is used earlier at 12:45. This is its only other use in Exodus. The related verb is used at 2:9 and here. It is used 20 times in the OT.

#### HEBREW GRAMMAR:

The Hebrew construction that denotes emphasis is used extensively in this chapter: 22:2-3, 5, 11-13, 15-16, 18, 22, 25. It is the grammatical construction called the infinitive absolute followed by the same verb in either the perfect or imperfect form.

#### COMMENTARY:

This paragraph of laws relates to one's negligence and loaning tools or animals to one's "friend" or "neighbor." In verse 5, if a man allows his animal to graze in the field of a neighbor, he is to reimburse him for the lost crops, from his own best in his vineyard. If one kindles a fire (ver. 6) and it burns bushes or thorns (which could be used as a barrier around the livestock), and the fire consumes the crops (in the field or already harvested), then the instigator will reimburse the man for his loss.

There is a long series of laws which relate to loaning and borrowing (ver. 7-15). If someone loans something, which is then stolen, the thief will reimburse twice what was stolen (ver. 7). If the thief isn't found, the one who borrowed will come to "God" (some translations use "judge" as a representative for God) and it will be determined if he "extended his hand" to the neighbor's belongings (ver. 8). If it is determined that the borrower's word is a "word of sin" or a "breach of trust," God (the "judges") will hear the position of both individuals and if the borrower is found guilty, he will reimburse double.

If someone loans an animal and it dies or is stolen while in the custody of the borrower (ver. 10) and no one is witness to the event, then the borrower must make an oath (ver. 11) before Jehovah God swearing his innocence in the matter. In that case, he will not have to reimburse. This shows that the Commandments at 20:7 and 20:16 are not against *all* oaths, but only oaths which were lies or in which the person did not intend to fulfill. On the other hand, if it is determined that the animal was stolen (ver. 12), the owner will be reimbursed. If the loaned animal is ravaged unexpectedly, the borrower is not guilty. He needs to bring the animal to the judge(s) as evidence and he will not have to reimburse (ver. 13).

If the owner is not with the borrower when the animal is injured or dies, the borrower will reimburse the owner (ver. 15). If the owner is with the borrower, then the borrower will not have to reimburse for the death of the animal. It was simply an animal that was "on hire."

#### APPLICATION:

*Later Jewish writers* - Sometimes, service was given in place of a dowry. See David's dowry for King Saul's daughter, Michal (1 Sam. 17:25; 18:20-27; 2 Sam. 3:14); Othniel's dowry for Achsah (Josh. 15:16-17; Judg 1:12-13); Jacob's service for Rachel and Leah (Gen. 29:15-20, 27-28).

*NT writers* - The story of Zaccheus, told in Luke 19, presents an individual who, changed by his encounter with Christ, chose to reimburse if he had swindled anyone.

#### TRANSLATION - 22:16-24:

**16** And if a man deceives a virgin who is not engaged and he lies with her, to give a dowry, he will give a dowry to her, for a wife. **17** If to refuse her father refuses to give her to him, silver he will weigh as a dowry for the virgin.

**18** A sorceress must not live.

**19** Everyone laying down with an animal, to die he will die.

**20** One offering to gods he will be destroyed, unless to Jehovah alone.

**21** A stranger you will not mistreat and you will not oppress him because strangers you were in the land of Egypt.

**22** Every widow and orphan you will not humiliate. **23** If to humiliate, you humiliate him then if to cry he cries to Me, to hear I will hear his cry **24** And My anger will be kindled and I will kill you all by the sword and they will be your wives widows and your sons orphans.

#### HEBREW WORDS:

"To deceive" (ver. 16) is used 27 times in the OT; it is used only here in Exodul. "Virgin" is used only here (22:15-16) in Exodul. The word is used 50 times in the OT. "To be engaged" is used 9 times in the OT; only here in Exodul. "To give a dowry" is only used here and Psalm 16:4. "To weigh" (ver. 17) is used only here in Exodul. It is the verbal form of the noun "shekel." The verb is used 23 times. This noun "dowry" is related to the verb used in the prior verse. The noun is only used here; Genesis 34:12; 1 Sam. 18:25. "Sorcerer" (ver. 18) was used earlier at

7:11. It will be used only again at Deut. 18:9-14; Mal. 3:5; Dan. 2:2. "To slaughter" (ver. 20) was used earlier at 3:18; it can mean "to offer a sacrifice." "To be destroyed" is used only here in Exodus, out of 50 uses. It denotes something that has been banned for extermination. "To mistreat" (ver. 21) is used only here in Exodus, out of 19 times. "To oppress" was used earlier at 3:9.

"Widow" (ver. 22) is used 55 times in the OT, only here (22:21, 23) in Exodus. "Orphan" is used in the same texts in Exodus, out of 42 uses. "To humiliate or to humble" was used earlier at 1:11-12; 10:3. The verb "to cry" (ver. 23) was used earlier at 5:8, 15. The related noun "cry" was used earlier at 3:7, 9. "To kindle (anger)" (ver. 24) was used earlier at 4:14. "Anger" was used also earlier at 4:14. "To kill" was used earlier at 2:14-15.

#### HEBREW GRAMMAR:

The Hebrew construction that denotes emphasis is used extensively in this chapter: 22:2-3, 5, 11-13, 15-16, 18, 22, 25. It is the grammatical construction called the infinitive absolute followed by the same verb in either the perfect or imperfect form.

#### COMMENTARY:

A series of unrelated laws follow. If a man deceives a virgin and has a sexual relationship with her, he will be required to give a dowry to her parents and take her as his wife (ver. 16). The presumption here is that she gives some level of consent to the relationship. Rapists will be condemned by the death penalty (Deut. 22:22-29). If the father refuses to give her hand in marriage, then the man will be required to simply pay a dowry to the dad (ver. 17). The custom in the OT and NT times relative to marriage is that the man would offer a dowry to the father for her hand in marriage. If the father accepted, then the woman became engaged and was legally bound to her fiancé. If she were to engage in a sexual relationship with another man, she would be viewed as an adulteress. After a period of the engagement, then the families would have a marriage ceremony and she would legally become his wife.

Because God wanted man (for his own good) to only listen to God and trust His message, God will condemn all forms of communication from people who pretend to be speaking for God. In this case (ver. 18), it is the sorceress. She is to be put to death.

Bestiality, the sexual relationship with an animal, was punishable by death (ver. 19). It violates God's design and plan for humanity (Gen. 1:27-28). It was also practiced frequently in pagan worship rituals.

In verse 20, we have a reiteration of the Commandments from 20:3-4. Man is only to worship Jehovah God. If someone sacrifices to false gods, then he shall be "destroyed." This word denotes someone or something which is banned by God (see Josh. 6:18-19), and ordained for destruction.

In verse 21, God requires Israel to care for the stranger who lives among them. This would not refer to foreigners who did not live among them, but to strangers (non-Israelites) who lived within their borders. They were not to oppress these individuals *because* they were strangers in the land of Egypt.

There were a large number of orphans and widows in the time period due to wars, diseases, and famine. Therefore, in verses 22-24, God requires Israel to treat with respect those members of society who were easily neglected and abused: orphans, widows, and strangers. Israel should not "humiliate" them ("afflict"; ver. 22). If they do, the orphan (mentioned 42 times in the OT) or widow (mentioned 55 times in the OT) would cry out to God and He will certainly hear their cry (ver. 23). At that point, God's anger will be kindled and He will kill by the sword those offending Him and He will make the children of the offender into orphans and the wives of the offenders into widows (ver. 24). God clearly takes this matter very seriously. In fact, while the exiles in Assyria and Babylon were largely due to Israel's idolatry, it is also true that their idolatry led them to take advantage of these people in society and God punished them for that - indeed, by the sword.

#### APPLICATION:

*Moses' contemporaries* - God will condemn all forms of communication (false prophets, talking to the dead) which pretended to communicate God's will to man in ways that were false. The death penalty is also required in Leviticus 19:31; 20:27. The "sorceress" here is female; the male sorcerer is condemned in Deuteronomy 18:9-14. God also repeats the fact that sexual relationships with animals (which was practiced often in pagan worship practices) was sinful and punishable by death: Lev. 18:23; 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21. For God's law on the rapist, see Deuteronomy 22:22-29.

For more on the treatment of strangers, see Deuteronomy 24:17-22. For more on the treatment of widows, see Deuteronomy 24:19-21. To provide for widows, God required the closest male family member to marry her, to provide children for her; see Deuteronomy 25:5-10. The story of Ruth is a beautiful story illustrating the application of this law. For a false prophet in Israel's early history, see Numbers 23:23. See also Exodus 23:9; Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:18-19; 24:14, 17-18; 27:19.

*Later Jewish writers* - A sorceress was involved in the events leading to the death of King Saul, recorded in 1 Samuel 28. See also 2 Kings 9:21-26; Micah 5:10-15; Jer. 27:8-11; Nahum 3:1-4. For more on treating properly those neglected by society, see: Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Zech. 7:9-10; Isa. 1:17, 23; 3:14-15; 10:2; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 16:49; 18:17; 22:7, 29; Amos 8:4; Mal. 3:5; Psalm 82:3; 94:6.

*NT writers* - Some reflection of Jewish marriage rituals are seen in the event with Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Matthew 1:18-25 and the Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25. James requires Christians to provide for the needs of orphans and widows (James 1:27). This command could be fulfilled either by individual Christians or a congregation of Christians. The NT also commands Christians to provide for widows, an extensive discussion being found in 1 Timothy 5:1-16. Sorcery is also condemned in the NT (Gal. 5:20). Caring for the poor is also an expectation Jesus has of Christians: Gal. 2:10. See also His words from the Sermon on the plain: Luke 6:34-36; Eph. 4:28. In the NT, false teachers are still condemned by God and their mouths must be stopped (Titus 1:10-11).

#### TRANSLATION - 22:25-31:

**25** If silver you will lend My people, My poor ones with you, there will not be for him a creditor you will not put on him interest. **26** If to pledge, you pledge a mantle to your friend until the sun comes, you will hand it over to him. **27** Because it [is] the covering to him only; it is his cloak for his body in what he will lay down and it will be that he will cry out to Me and I will hear because gracious I am.

**28** God you will not revile and princes among your people you will not curse.

**29** Your harvest and your vintage you will not delay; the firstborn of your sons, you will give to Me. **30** Thus you will do to your ox, to your flock seven days it will be with its mom; on the eighth day you will give [it] to Me.

**31** Men of holiness you will be to Me and the flesh in the field torn will not be eaten; to the dogs you will throw it.

#### HEBREW WORDS:

"To lend" (ver. 25) is only used here in Exodul, out of 8 occasions. "Creditor" is used only here and 5 more times in the OT. "Interest" is used only here in Exodul, out of 12 times. "To pledge" (ver. 26) is used only here in Exodul, out of 13 uses. "Covering" (ver. 27) was used earlier at 21:10. "Cloak" was used earlier at 3:22. "Body" or "skin" is used from this verse through the end of Exodul 17 times, out of 99 in the OT. "Gracious" is used here and 34:6 in Exodul, out of 13 times. "To revile" (ver. 28) was used earlier at 21:17. "Princes" was used earlier at 16:22. "To curse" is used only here in Exodul, out of 63 times. This is the only use of "harvest" (ver. 29) in Exodul; it is used 38 times in the OT. "Vintage" is only used here. It refers to the harvest of grape juice from the vine. "To delay" is used only here in Exodul, out of 18 uses. "Firstborn" was used earlier at 4:22-23. The noun "holiness" (ver. 31) was used earlier at

3:5. “Torn” was seen earlier at 22:12. “Dogs” was used earlier at 11:7. “To throw” was used earlier at 1:22; 4:3.

#### HEBREW GRAMMAR:

The Hebrew construction that denotes emphasis is used extensively in this chapter: 22:2-3, 5, 11-13, 15-16, 18, 22, 25. It is the grammatical construction called the infinitive absolute followed by the same verb in either the perfect or imperfect form.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

Interest rates in the ancient near east could reach as high as 50%.

#### COMMENTARY:

In verses 25-27, God uses “I” or “Me” eight times. The OT speaks of God’s concern for the poor, according to one count, as many as 400 times! This first paragraph relates to loans, specifically to the poor. Because Israel was an agricultural society and most people lived from what they could grow, if a poor person needed money, they did not have enough income to pay interest. God forbid wealthy Israelites from charging interest to the poorer Israelites. However, the poor man could use his mantle for collateral, or a “pledge.” But, the mantle should be returned before the end of the day since the poor man used it for warmth on cool nights. If the wealthy person did not return the pledge (mantle), then God would hear the poor man’s cry and He would respond. Because He is “gracious.” God is characterized as “gracious” thirteen times in the OT and usually in association with society’s neglected peoples.

Returning to the Israelites’ respect for Jehovah God, in verse 28, God forbid Israel from “reviling” (disrespecting, especially through disrespectful words) Jehovah God as well as the “princes” (leaders) among the people they should not curse. Because human rulers serve in the place of God, it is not surprising that God holds His people accountable for submitting to the leadership of human rulers. The relationship between God and human rulers is so close that some translations will translate “God” (*elohim* in Hebrew) as “judges” in 22:8-9. The word “curse” (for human rulers) is actually a stronger term than the word “revile” (for God); this indicates, again, that God expects Israel to obey and respect their human rulers.

Relative to gifts and sacrifices offered to God, in verses 29-30, God required timely offerings; Israel was not to postpone their gifts, whether from their harvest of crops or their “juice / wine” or their livestock. The livestock, however, could be offered once they have reached their eighth day of age.

God had told Israel in 19:5-6 that they were to be a “holy nation.” Here, God specifies again that they were to be “men of holiness” (ver. 31). In other words, they were to live separately from the nations around them, fulfilling the Law of Moses in order to be holy. When it comes to eating meat properly prepared, if it was torn by wild animals in the field or forest, it was not to be eaten. The meat was to be thrown to the dogs.

#### APPLICATION:

*Moses’ contemporaries* - God makes Israel holy (Exo. 31:13) by directing it to live differently. For eating animals torn by other animals, see Leviticus 17:15. For more on the law against interest, see Leviticus 25:35-38; Deuteronomy 23:19-21; 24:10-13. Israel could charge non-Israelites with interest: Deut. 23:20. On accepting a pledge for a loan, see Deuteronomy 24:12-13. The “firstborn” of Israel were claimed by God when He killed the firstborn out of Egypt (Exodus 13). Those firstborn ones were replaced a month later by the tribe of Levi (Numbers 3). Reviling God is discussed in Leviticus 24:10-23 where the punishment is death by stoning. For further descriptions of God’s nature, see: Exo. 22:26; 34:6.

*Later Jewish writers* - On the “pledge for a loan,” see Amos 2:8. 2 Kings 4:1 has a story which illustrates God’s expectations for Israel to treat the poor respectfully. We also see a story in 1 Kings 21 which illustrates the principle that blasphemy against God brought the death

penalty (albeit in this case, it was unjustified). For further descriptions of God's nature, see: Psa. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 116:5; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Neh. 9:17, 31; 2 Chron. 30:9.

*NT writers* - When Jesus claimed that He and the Father were one (John 10:30), the Jews decided to stone Him to death because they accused Him of blasphemy (John 10:31-35). However, they refused to draw the conclusion based on the evidence of His works; His miracles proved His message was true. The apostle Paul quotes verse 28 in his trial before the Sanhedrin in Acts 23:5. The attitude of Christians toward their civil rulers is emphasized in Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:17. God requires Christians to also respect their leaders in the church: 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17.