

Sermon Handout

The Case Laws

Exodus 21:1-22:27

- I. Prologue: “Set these judgments (ordinances) before them.” 21:1 *cf.* 24:3
Specific civic application of the 10 Commandments.

- II. The layout of the passage 21:2-22:27
Civil case laws (instructional)
Each one is introduced by conditional language “if . . . then . . .”
They are 10 in number, arranged as a chiasm
 - A Fairness to servants 21:2-11
 - B Punishment for capital crimes 21:12-17
 - C Punishment for non-capital assault 21:18-27
 - D Restitution for injury or death by an animal 21:28-32
 - E Restitution for property loss by accident 21:33-36
 - E¹ Restitution for property loss by theft 22:1-9
 - D¹ Restitution for injury or death of an animal 22:10-15
 - C¹ Punishment for non-capital fornication 22:16-17
 - B¹ Punishment for capital crimes 22:18-20
 - A¹ Fairness to strangers, widows, orphans & the poor 22:21-27

- III. Examining the pairs
 - a. Fairness to the disenfranchised
 - b. Capital crimes of various types
 - c. Non-capital crimes – assault, seduction
 - d. Restitution involving animals – injury and death
 - e. Restitution involving loss of property– accidents and theft

- IV. The *lex talionis* vv. 23-25
Recompense for a crime must fit the crime, neither greater nor lesser.
Protection for the victim
Protection for the perpetrator