**Other Laws Given by God**

**A Bible Story From**

**Exodus 20:22–23:33**

**Bible Story Number: 1010610**

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**Other Laws Given by God**

**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God made a profound promise to Abraham (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

This promise (covenant) was passed on to Isaac and Jacob. God reconfirmed His promise to the descendents of Abraham. The nation of Israel continued to be God’s chosen people.

The Israelites (descendents of Jacob) moved to Egypt as a part of God’s plan. God used what Joseph’s brothers intended as evil as a way to bless Joseph and rescue the entire family.

After the tenth plague that God sent on the Egyptian people, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites leave. They had been in Egypt 430 years. The day they left, there were approximately 600,000 foot soldiers in the Israelites army. The total number of people was much larger because this did not include their families.

The Ten Commandments are familiar to many people, regardless of their background of biblical knowledge. However, this common knowledge is not always accurate or complete. Group leaders should be aware that an individual’s knowledge about the existence of the Ten Commandments does not always mean they understand their meaning. This Bible story is an important continuation and provides other laws and commands (statutes) that God gave His people.

**Story from the Bible**

**Exodus 20:22–23:33**

This is what the Bible says.

God continued to speak to Moses. He gave additional laws that were to be given to the Israelite people.

God spoke though Moses and said:

Do not make any gods of silver to rival Me or gods of gold for yourself.

Make an altar to Me from the earth and there offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Offer your sheep, goats and cattle.

If you make an altar of stone, do not use a chisel or any other tool on it. It must not be built out of cut stone.

An altar cannot have any steps so that your nakedness is not exposed.

God gave Moses the following ordinances for the people to follow:

When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to work for you for six years. The seventh year he is to be set free without any payment. If he comes to you alone, then he leaves alone. If he comes with a wife, then his wife leaves with him. If the master gives his slave a wife and she has any children, they belong to the master. The wife and children stay with the master when the man goes free. If the slave who is to be freed decides to stay, the master is to take him to the judges. He is to pierce his ear with an awl and the man becomes a slave for life.

A female slave is not freed as the male slaves. However, if her master chooses her for himself, he must redeem her as he would a free woman. He cannot sell her to a foreigner. If he chooses her for his son, he must give her the customary treatment of a daughter. If he takes her as an additional wife, he must not reduce the food, clothing, or marital rights of his first wife. If he does not do all these things, the slave woman may leave and owe nothing.

Anyone who strikes another person and causes his death must be put to death. If he did not intend any harm, he can go to one of the cities of refuge. If it is a willful murder, you must put him to death.

Anyone who strikes or curses his father or mother or kidnaps another person (whether he sells him or not), must be put to death.

If a man injures another man in a quarrel, and the man does not die from his injuries but is confined to bed and later recovers, the man who caused the injuries is exempt from punishment. He must still pay for his lost wages and provide for his complete recovery.

If a man strikes his male or female slave, and the slave dies under his abuse, the owner must be punished. However, if the slave can stand up after a day or two, the owner should not be punished because he is his owner’s property.

If a man hits a pregnant woman and causes the child to be born prematurely but there is no injury, the man who hit her must pay any fine the woman’s husband demands. If the unborn child is injured, the offender must give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, bruise for bruise, and wound for wound.

If a man hits and damages his slave’s eye or knocks out a tooth, then he must let the slave go free in compensation.

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be stoned, and its meat may not be eaten, but the ox’s owner is innocent. However, if the ox was in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned yet does not restrain it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned, and its owner must also be put to death. If instead a ransom is demanded of him, he can pay a redemption price for his life. If it gores a son or a daughter, he is to be dealt with according to this same law. If the ox gores a male or female slave, he must give 30 shekels of silver to the slave’s master, and the ox must be stoned.

If a man uncovers a pit (or digs a pit and does not cover it), and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit must give compensation; he must pay its owner, but the dead animal will become his.

If a man’s ox injures his neighbor’s ox and it dies, they must sell the live ox and divide its proceeds; they must also divide the dead animal. However, if it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not restrained it, he must compensate fully, ox for ox; the dead animal will become his.

A thief who steals an ox or a sheep that is butchered or sold must repay five cattle for the ox or four sheep for the sheep. If a thief is caught in the act of breaking in at night, and he is beaten to death, no one is guilty of bloodshed. If it happens after sunrise, the person is guilty of bloodshed. A thief must make full restitution for his theft. If he is unable, he is to be sold as a slave because of his theft. If what was stolen (ox, donkey or sheep) is actually found alive in his possession, he must repay double.

If a man lets his animals graze in his field or vineyard and then allows his animals to go and graze in someone else’s field, he must repay with the best of his own field or vineyard.

If a fire gets out of control and damages someone else’s field, the one who started the fire must make full restitution for what was burned.

If a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep, but they are stolen from that person’s house, the thief, if caught, must repay double. If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must present himself to the judges to determine whether or not he has taken his neighbor’s property. In any case of wrongdoing involving an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or anything else lost, the one the judges condemn must repay double to his neighbor.

If a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any other animal to care for, but it dies, is injured, or is stolen while no one is watching, there must be an oath before God between the two of them to determine whether or not he has taken his neighbor’s property. Its owner must accept the oath, and the other man does not have to make restitution. But if, in fact, the animal was stolen from his custody, he must make restitution to its owner. If it was actually killed by a wild animal, he is to bring it as evidence and he does not have to make restitution.

If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while he has it, the man must make full restitution. If its owner is there, the man does not have to make restitution. If it was rented, the loss is covered by its rental price.

If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and has sexual relations with her, he must pay the bridal price for her to be his wife. If her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay the bridal price for virgins.

The following crimes are punishable by death: sorcery, sexual intercourse with an animal, and a person who sacrifices to any gods, except God alone.

You must not exploit or oppress a foreign resident. You yourselves know how it feels to be a foreigner since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

You must not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, they will no doubt cry to God, and He will hear their cry. His anger will burn, and He will kill you with the sword; then your wives will be widows and your children fatherless.

If you lend money to another Jewish person or to a poor person among you, you must not charge him interest.

If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as collateral, you must return it to him before sunset. For it is his only covering; it is the clothing for his body. And if he cries out to God, God will listen because He is compassionate.

You must not blaspheme God or curse a leader among your people.

You must not hold back offerings from your harvest. Give God the firstborn of your sons. Do the same with your cattle and your flock. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but on the eighth day you are to give them to God.

You must not eat the meat of a mauled animal found in the field; throw it to the dogs.

You must not give a false report.

You must not follow a crowd in wrongdoing.

Do not show favoritism to a poor person in his lawsuit. You must not deny justice to a poor person among you in his lawsuit.

If you come across your enemy’s stray ox or donkey, you must return it to him.

If you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying helpless under its load, you must help with it.

You must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words of the righteous.

Work your land for six years and gather its produce. But during the seventh year you are to let the land rest and leave it uncultivated. The poor among you may eat from it and the wild animals may consume what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

Work for six days but rest on the seventh day so that your livestock and slaves may rest and be refreshed.

Pay close attention to everything God has said to you. You must not invoke the names of other gods.

Celebrate the festivals to honor God. Observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering. These are the three times each year that all males are to present themselves to God. Bring the best of the firstfruits of your land to the house of God.

You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

I am God and I am going to send an angel before you to protect you on the way and bring you to the place I have prepared. Listen to My angel and obey him. He will not forgive you if you rebel. If you are careful to obey him, I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes. My angel will go before you and bring you to the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe

them out. Do not bow down to their gods or worship them. Do not imitate their practices. Instead, destroy their gods and their sacred places.

Worship Me, and I will bless you. You will not be sick because I will remove illnesses from you. None of your women will miscarry or be childless. I will bless you with a long life.

I will cause the people who would be against you to be terrified before you. I will throw them into confusion. I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you in retreat. I will drive them out ahead of you. I will drive them out little by little so that the land does not become desolate or filled with wild animals. You will take possession of the land from the Rea Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and from the wilderness to the Euphrates River. I will give you control of the land and its inhabitants. Do not make any agreements with them or their gods. They cannot remain in the land. If they do, they will cause you to sin against me. If you worship their gods, it will be a snare for you.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* Did any of these laws surprise you?
* Why do you think God gave these laws?
* Do all of these laws apply to the followers of Jesus today?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.