

2025 3 Q Exodus Lesson 9

Living the Law

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

- “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.” ’ ” Exodus 20:22, 23, NKJV.

The text is about not making idols, and from last week’s lesson—**SUNDAY**, the second paragraph states the following:

- After two months of traveling, the Israelites arrived at Sinai (Exod. 19:1), where they would remain for about one year (compare Exod. 19:1 with Num. 10:11, 12). During this year, many laws were issued, as described in Exodus 19–40, Leviticus 1–27, and Numbers 1:1–10:10. Israel’s stay at Mount Sinai is the central piece of the narrative found in the first five books of Moses. Here is the foundation of their becoming God’s chosen people, the only nation not steeped in paganism and idolatry. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 65.

What do you think of the last sentence, “Here is the foundation of their becoming God’s chosen people, the only nation not steeped in paganism and idolatry”?

It is certainly true that God is working to establish them as His chosen people—chosen for the mission we discussed last week, not for exclusive salvation. But is it true they are the only nation not steeped in paganism and idolatry?

What was the golden calf? What about the rest of their history? Did they have a long history of idolatry that resulted in the 70-year captivity and the eventually captivity and dispersement of the 10 tribes to the north?

It is often suggested that after the 70-year captivity they were cured of idolatry. And it is true, that after that period, those who rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple and established Yahweh worship there, never returned to worshiping images made with their own hands, or going after Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech or the other gods they had worshiped in the past. In fact, the record supports that they stayed faithful to the script, the written laws of Moses and the prophets, following the blueprint given by God after the Exodus. Does that mean they were not steeped in paganism and idolatry? Or were they?

A couple of questions about this and then evidence:

Who were the ones demanding the death of Jesus? It was the Jewish religious leaders who claimed to be faithful to the law, Moses, the Scriptures and to be worshipers of Yahweh. It was not the pagan Romans. Didn't pagan Pilate make a weak attempt to prevent Jesus' crucifixion? So, would their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus suggest they were worshiping God or were they idolaters?

What is idolatry? Is idolatry only the worship of physical images, or is it the worship of any concept or belief system that replaces the truth about God? Could a person be an idolator, a pagan, while reading the Bible and claiming to be worshiping Jesus?

Jesus said to the church leaders of His day,

- You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. John 5:39-40 NIV84.

Were they worshiping God or something else? Is this bibliolatry? Making the Bible an idol?

Consider this Bible commentary, do you agree?

- Thousands have a **false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. *Faith I Live By* p. 59, emphasis mine.

Does having the right Bible, the right Sabbath, the right belief that God is the Creator, the right sanctuary, the right list of Ten Commandments, the right foods, and belonging to the right organization that is called by God for mission, mean one is worshiping God, and is not a pagan or an idol worshiper?

Doesn't Satan and his fallen angels believe the Bible is inspired by God, God is Creator, Jesus is the Savior, and that God gave the Ten Commandments?

My point is that believing right facts, right doctrines, does not equal salvation and does not mean one is worshiping the true God.

Salvation is being reborn, having our individuality, identity, personhood, freed from the spirit (animating energy, motivational power) of fear and selfishness and receiving, through trust/faith, the life, the spirit, the animating motivating power of Jesus via His indwelling Spirit. It is being reborn in the inner man.

All such people will no longer live controlled by fear, including the fear of being wrong, the fear of having their ideas challenged, the fear of making mistakes, they will love God and therefore, because God is infinite truth, they will love truth and acknowledge the truth that they are not infinite. This means all the saved acknowledge that they don't know everything, that what they believe, the way they believe it, is imperfect and partial and they will love to grow, mature, advance in unfolding truth as God reveals it to them.

But the unconverted are controlled, not just tempted, but controlled by the spirit of fear and they mitigate their fear through various means including religious dogma, laws, rules, rituals, ceremonies, and actions, all designed to make them feel safe, to give them a sense of security. They feel safe by knowing the right facts, keeping the right rules, having their foot on first base—you can't tag me out if I have my foot on the bag—God!

And anything that questions or undermines their beliefs is not celebrated, it inflames fear, which causes them to seek to silence such voices rather than seek to explore the truth and identify where they themselves are wrong.

This is what the religious leaders in Jesus' day did. This is what the religious leaders did to the Reformers throughout all ages. And this is what continues to happen today. And those who function like this give evidence that they are not worshiping God, but are worshiping the imposter, the creature whose government operates upon made up rules with inflicted punishments.

The message from Jesus is a call away from the imposed law constructs and into the reality of worshiping Him as Creator and opening the heart to Him to be reborn with a new heart and right spirit, a spirit of love and trust and then to live free, free in Jesus, free from the domination of that old life.

Read the first paragraph:

- God desired His people to be different from the surrounding nations. He wanted them established as a devoted community of faith who would live under His leadership and authority. Everyone would be subject to His law. Judges were to be appointed as administrators of the law, and the priests were to teach it. Parents also played a crucial role. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 72.

How is faith established? Biblical faith is best described in today's English as trust, an abiding trust in God.

Can trust be established by legislation? Can trust be established by claim or proclamation? Can trust be established by threatening to punish people who don't trust you? Can God establish trust by threatening to punish people who don't trust Him? No this is why Paul wrote,

- Do you show contempt for the riches of [God's] kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" Romans 2:4 NIV84.

Genuine, living, faith or abiding transforming trust is only established but the evidence of trustworthiness—which is the reality of who God is. God is love and truth and gives real freedom and is the source of life, not death.

But, can people place their faith, their trust, in something other than God?

- What if people are taught that sin is a legal problem, that sin doesn't actually destroy, sin doesn't harm, sin doesn't cause death, but that God, in order to be just, must use His power to punish, and the minimum punishment in God's universe for the smallest sin is execution at His hands?
- And what if it is taught that the bigger the list of sins, that God, in addition to using His power to execute, must first torture for appropriate lengths of time before killing?
- And what if it is taught this is the way things are because God must enforce His law?
- But it is also taught that God is love and would prefer not to do this, but because He is just He is required by law, and also by the holiness of His character, to kill, to torture, to wield the power of death?
- And what if it was taught that you were born in sin and even though it wasn't your choice to be born in sin, you have still sinned, and therefore are legally condemned and justly deserve torture and execution by God?

If you were taught all of this, and you still believed in God, where would you place your trust?

In Jesus? What would you trust Jesus to do for you in this penal legal scenario?

- Take your place and take your punishment, even though He is innocent?
- And then would you have faith in a god who kills the innocent and calls that justice?
- Would you trust Jesus to pay your legal debt—which would be a human sacrifice paid to a punishing god?
- Be executed by the Father so the Father won't execute you?
- Plead to His Father His blood as the legal payment for your sin debt in order to propitiate His wrath, which means without that action God wouldn't lash out against you?
- Cover you in His robe of righteousness so the Father won't see your sinfulness—because if the Father saw it He would have to kill you?
- Apply His blood to your record book so in the judgment the Father won't have a legal record of your crimes—because if there are any records of sin in your account God will use His power to torture and kill you?
- Apply His life record in place of your life record so in the judgment the Father legally declares you righteous while you remain unrighteous?

If you have ever believed any of this or know people who do, where is faith being placed in these teachings?

All of these teachings lead people to place their faith in various mechanics, legal processes, intercessors, but not in the Father. All of these ideas teach people to distrust the Father, to fear the Father, to believe that if something isn't done to the Father that Father will use His power to harm, to

torture, to kill. Faith in God is not restored in these false penal legal theories, it is undermined, and the knowledge of God is not advanced, it is obscured.

What is the spirit behind such teachings? Fear, every one of these false doctrines are motivated by fear and inflame fear, fear of punishment, fear of rejection, fear of shame and guilt, and all of them increase fear of God and are motivated to protect self from God, not surrender self to God for the death of our sinful life and the infusion of a new life, the life of Christ. And this is what is required for salvation, the death, surrender, of our fear infected life and the receipt of the sinless holy life of Jesus through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is called being reborn with a new heart and right spirit—and this only comes by faith, which is trust, that opens the heart and surrenders to Jesus. This is the righteousness by faith message that was rejected by the imposed law legalists in our church at 1888.

Imposed law with human style justice of imposed penalties, obstructs this because it teaches people to place their trust in the mechanics of legal loopholes and inculcates into the heart a belief in a god that cannot be trusted, one who is the source of death, one who needs something done to him to keep him from harming us. And this is Satan's goal, to so twist the truth about God, His law, His methods, His government, the plan of salvation, that while people claim to believe in Him, they are actually worshiping God's enemy and promoting lies about God—just like the Bible believing, Yahweh claiming, Jews who crucified Christ 2000 years ago.

Read the last paragraph, but before we do, let's remind ourselves of Jesus' words:

- God's law reveals Him, that is, His goodness, love, values, righteousness, and His restraints against evil. As the law is holy and just, so is God. While creating space for an abundant life, the law also helps protect us from dangers and calamities. Respect for God, for each other, and for life's values were the basis of His legislative system. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 72.

I don't know the intention of the author or editor in this paragraph, but its wording, particularly the last sentence is at best just very poorly worded, or at worst, destructively false.

If poorly worded, the author does not mean, "God's legislative system" but meant the temporarily added system of rules given to the Jews at Sinai to help them in their sinful and unrenewed state to maintain civil order and avoid anarchy and societal destruction.

Remember, Jesus said that His kingdom is **not** of this world when He was standing in Jerusalem with this Levitical system still in operation. Jesus did not say, "My kingdom is not of this world except for Israel." He did not say, that that legal and legislative system was His kingdom—no, imposed rules with imposed penalties are not God's eternal kingdom.

It is true that God's law reveals Him—and the entire Great Controversy has occurred because of a question over God's law. What a person believes about how God's law functions directly and immediately **determines** who they believe God to be, what character they ascribe to Him.

If a person believes God's law is legislative, made-up rules, the kinds of laws a creature makes, then they always believe in a god that must use his power to police and punishing law-breaking, and their god is the god of death, the god who is the source of death inflicted for so-called justice sake.

But when we return to worshiping God as Creator, and understand that His laws are the laws of the Builder of reality, the laws that the universe and life are built and operate upon, gravity, physics, the law of health and worship, and all moral laws, then we understand reality, we understand that deviating from God's laws takes one out of harmony with life and causes death and God has been using His power to hold death at bay, to eradicate sin, and save sinners by restoring His living law into our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10).

Consider this commentary,

- **The last great conflict** between truth and error is but the final struggle of the **long-standing controversy concerning the law of God**. Upon this battle we are now entering—a **battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah**, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.” *The Great Controversy*, p. 582. emphasis mine.

The final issue in this war is over how we understand God's law and, thus, how we understand God's character and government to function. Do we understand God's laws are the laws only the Creator can establish, the laws the govern the operations of reality itself, or do we prefer the laws of men and teach God's laws are functionally no different that what creatures use, made up rules?

Consider this commentary,

- **“Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error**. Upon this battle we are now entering—a **battle not between rival churches** contending for the supremacy, but between the religion of the Bible and the religions of fable and tradition.” *Prophets and Kings*, p. 625 emphasis mine.

God's law is not legislative, that is Roman, that is human, that is what a creature does. And our battle is not between rival churches, have you ever heard preachers focusing on other church organizations and running them down and suggesting our battle is with rival churches? It is a battle for your heart and mind over whether you are a worshiper of the Creator or you worship a creature-god, a pagan god, and the law you believe your God governs by defines whether you are worshiping the Creator or a creature.

Consider this commentary:

- “The great controversy [is] between Christ, the Prince of life, the Author of our salvation, and Satan, the prince of evil, the author of sin, the first transgressor of God's holy law. Satan's enmity against Christ has been manifested against His followers. **The same hatred of the principles of God's law, the same policy of deception, by which error is made to appear as truth, by which human laws are substituted for the law of God**, and men are led to

worship the creature rather than the Creator, may be traced in all the history of the past. **Satan's efforts to misrepresent the character of God, to cause men to cherish a false conception of the Creator**, and thus to regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love, his endeavors to set aside the divine law, leading the people to think themselves free from its requirements, and his persecution of those who dare to resist his deceptions, have been steadfastly pursued in all ages. They may be traced in the history of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of martyrs and reformers.” *The Great Controversy*, 1888, x.1, emphasis mine.

This is the issue, how do we understand God's law, and that directly determines who we understand God to be; it determines who we are worshiping, and that determines, via the law of worship, who we become like, what methods we use, whose character we reveal. It determines what we understand sin to be, what we understand justice to be, what we understand the plan of salvation to be, and whether we trust God or trust some legal formula to protect us from God.

The message for this time in human history is the message to call people out of the Roman imposed law legal system and back to worshiping the Creator God whose laws are design laws and who has provided everything we need to be healed from sin through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

SUNDAY

Read the third paragraph,

- The Code of the Covenant is described in several chapters (Exod. 21:1–23:19). All these regulations and laws were issued to stop the avalanche of evil and to build an orderly society. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 73.

This is correct, the laws given in Exodus were issued for the purpose of establishing societal order, to prevent anarchy, tribal warfare, and to keep the people together long enough for the promised Messiah to be born through them and complete the plan of salvation. This system of laws did not provide salvation, and it does not represent how God's government works, it was added because of sin.

MONDAY

Read the second paragraph,

- God's laws included different issues. There were specific regulations against putting down or humiliating people. He did not want any kind of exploitation. In His mercy, God corrects the sinful tendencies of the human heart and restrains people's natural inclinations. Society was to be kept safe, evil eliminated, and good interpersonal relationships cultivated. Justice and love must rule all actions. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 74.

What do you think of this paragraph? As the lesson states, the only righteous use of imposed law with external imposed punishments is for the purpose of restraint, discipline, and protection.

Law and law enforcement cannot produce love, trust, holiness, sinlessness, righteousness. Law and law enforcement cannot remove fear, cannot remove selfishness, cannot cure an addiction, cannot take away envy, lust, pride, arrogance, perversity, and corruption.

God cannot punish sin out of His universe—and this is what the legalists don't understand, the legalist teach that God does punish sin out of His universe, but it is not possible to do so. The more inflicted punishments, the more people fear God and the less they trust Him.

This is why Satan works so desperately to sow his agents into Christianity to teach that God's law functions like human law and that God must use power to inflict punishment for sin—because it actively prevents trust in God and keeps people afraid of the Father.

Law and law enforcement cannot correct the sinful tendencies of the human heart, it can only restrain, discipline, and protect, and thereby place law-breakers in places where they can reflect, consider, and choose to repent and experience the rebirth with a new heart and right spirit. But, the use of law and law enforcement to restrain the evil doer (i.e., prison), does not change the heart, it only places reality-based barriers to their exploitation of others, providing them opportunity to reconsider. But, just like Pharaoh with each of the Ten Plagues had opportunity to reflect and reconsider but instead hardened his heart, many people choose to harden their hearts into further rebellion with law and law enforcement.

One of God's design laws is the law of exertion, if you want something to get stronger you must exercise it, because if you don't use it, you lose it. Jesus taught this reality in the parable of the talents, if you invest your talents they grow and you get more, if you bury them, you lose what you had. This is true not just for muscles, but for neurobiology, if you want strong math ability you must work problems, strong musical skill you must practice your instrument, strong language skills you must speak the language, strong reasoning ability you must practice reasoning things out. This is why Hebrews states that the mature are those who *have developed by practice*, the ability to discern right from wrong (Hebrews 5:14).

Understanding this design law, it exposes the fallacy that God can correct sinful tendencies of the human heart through law and law enforcement. We can use imposed laws to lock a pedophile away in prison, thereby restraining, protecting, and disciplining. But can we control what the pedophile imagines while they are in prison? And if they spend 10 years in prison imagining dastardly deeds, they come out a more rebellious, perverse, recidivist pedophile than they were when they went in.

Law and law enforcement cannot correct sinful hearts. The written law only diagnosis, exposes the terminal sin condition so that we might go to Jesus, place our trust in Him, and surrender our old terminal fear-based life inherited from Adam that causes all the acts of sin and receive a new life, the

life of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the animating motivating spirit of love and trust and be reborn so that we no longer live the fear-based selfish life but the life of Christ.

Paul makes this clear throughout all of his writings:

- Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:20 NIV84.
- You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. Romans 8:9-10 NIV84.
- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20 NIV84.

This is reality, it is the only path for salvation because the life we inherited from Adam is terminal, is the spirit of fear, the animating motivating energy of me-first survivalism and is out of harmony with God and the design laws He built life to exist and operate upon. We are born terminal, dead in trespass and sin. And we can only have life by receiving a sinless, righteous, holy life through trust in Jesus and this is received into our hearts here and now, it is not a legal declaration in a book somewhere.

Read the third paragraph,

- The Sabbath and the festivals were about worship and were re-minders of crucial events in salvation history. Worship was carefully regulated because this was the theological basis for all other activities. The Sabbath was established at Creation (Gen. 2:2, 3; Exod. 20:8–11), was connected to Israel’s deliverance and redemption (Deut. 5:12–15), and, in a powerful way, points to worshiping God as our Creator, Redeemer, and Lord (Mark 2:27, 28). *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 74.

A couple points from this paragraph, worship was carefully regulated because the Jewish system of ceremonies and festival worship was all object lesson, theater, teaching tools. Just as in any drama, play, or act there are actors with costumes, a stage, props, and a script, so too, this system of religious ritual, ceremony, and festivals was all theatrical, to teach by enactment the reality of sin and salvation. So, of course it had a very precise script, that we call Scripture, because God wanted the lessons to be accurate.

But that system of theater did not provide salvation—there is no salvation in going to the annual festivals, in sacrificing animals, in burning offerings, in dressing in priestly garments, etc. It was all teaching the reality of God cleansing and healing us from sin in reality.

This is why the writer of Hebrews wrote:

- The gifts and sacrifices being offered *were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper*. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order... But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. Hebrews 9:9,10, 10:3,4 NIV84, emphasis mine.

This is why Jesus directly and specifically stated that for salvation to happen that His flesh and blood must be applied inside the sinner, not to His Father or to record books in heaven. Jesus said,

- “I tell you the truth, unless **you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you**. Whoever **eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. **Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood** remains in me, and I in him.” John 6:53-56 NIV84, emphasis mine.

This is a metaphor describing that Jesus is the Word made flesh. We must partake of the flesh, the words of Jesus, the truth of who He and the Father are and how they function, the laws upon which reality operates. We must reject the imposed law lies about God and be won to trust. Then, when we are won to trust we open the heart and drink the blood—the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11), and thus to drink the blood means to receive the life of Jesus, the sinless life, the holy life, the immortal and eternal life, and we are reborn by the indwelling Holy Spirit who brings us this new life. This is reality, all built upon the design laws of our Creator who built and sustains the universe.

Satan seeks to replace this reality with a fiction, a fantasy, of legal adjustment, that leads people to have faith in legal payments but which obstructs them from receiving this new life, from being actually reborn with a new life of love and trust.

The second point to note from the lesson is that they correctly state that the Sabbath was established in at the Creation, in Genesis. Thus, they correctly acknowledge that the Sabbath was made, as Jesus said it was, and therefore has a beginning and is not eternal. The Sabbath didn’t exist before the creation of this planet, yet the angels already did as Job 38 tells us they sang together for joy when Earth was created.

The Sabbath didn’t exist before this time in history because it wasn’t needed. God created it because He created this planet and humanity after the war broke out in heaven, after Satan started his rebellion, after 1/3 of the angels believed his lies about God, that God makes up rules and uses power to punish rule-breakers. And therefore, after God used immense power to create this planet, God created the Sabbath as evidence, revelation, proof that Satan lied. And what is it that makes the Sabbath different from all the other six days of Creation week? The Bible and Commandment tells us—it is the only day of that week when GOD RESTED, it is when God STOPPED using power, when God refused to use power to punish sin, to force Satan and his rebellious angels to bow, when God demonstrated by His own action that He does not make up laws and enforce those laws through external punishments, but creates reality and leaves His intelligent creatures free to choose for themselves.

Satan hates the Sabbath because the Creator built it into the flow of time itself and thus it cannot be removed by a creature. Every single week all intelligences pass through this time and are to remember the Sabbath, are to reflect on why God created it, what makes it holy? God RESTED, God STOPPED using power, God gives real freedom, God's law and government are NOT the law and government of creatures, not made-up rules that require external inflicted punishments.

So Satan has attacked the Sabbath, first by corrupting it through the lie that it is just a made-up rule and it is enforced through external punishment. And thus the Jews wanted to kill Jesus for His actions of breaking their laws on the Sabbath. But then, Satan sought to replace the Sabbath with another day, a day that was not set apart by Creation, not a day when God rested (in fact after God's work of Creation He rested and after Jesus' work of redemption He rested in the tomb further demonstrating God doesn't win by use of power, but truth, love, and freedom), but the first as a day of worship was set apart by human legislation.

And today, while many SDAs have returned to recognize the Bible Sabbath is Saturday, they have not restored it to its design laws settings of holiness of God as Creator whose laws are design laws, but sadly teach it as Roman—a made up rule a cosmic imperial dictator who will use his power to punish you if you break his made up rule. The Sabbath taught this way continues to teach the lie about God and has not freed people from the Roman distortion about God and His character.

We are calling people out of Babylon, out of that system of imposed law with a god who is the source of death, and back to worshiping our Creator whose laws are design laws, back to delighting in the Sabbath as a gift from God built into time for us to remember that He is our Creator, our Savior, the One who makes us holy when we trust Him, because what He wants is our love, trust, and loyalty and that can never be achieved through law and law enforcement, only through truth, love, and freedom all of which the Sabbath embodies.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the eye for an eye tooth for a tooth laws, and references Jesus bringing this up in the Sermon on the Mount, and the lesson states in the first paragraph,

- “By His words, Jesus was restoring the original meanings of these laws.” *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 76.

I couldn't agree more with this statement, however, after making this statement and referencing Jesus as the authority to teach the true and original meaning of these laws, the lesson goes on to say the following, paragraphs 4-6:

- The **original intention of this law** was formulated against any personal revenge. It was to stop blood feuds, or retaliation without an investigation first. Injury had to be evaluated by judges, and then a proper monetary compensation would be established and paid. This practice was

done in order to stop people from “taking the law into their own hands.” **Justice was to be done, but it had to be done according to God’s law.**

Jesus Christ, who gave these social laws to Moses, **knew the purpose of this law**; therefore, **He could apply it in an objective way, according to its original intention.** The motive behind it was to bring justice and reconciliation, and to restore peace.

One could argue that, in a sense, **justice implies a kind of vengeance.** The proper application of these laws was, it seemed, an attempt to find the **right balance between the ideas of justice and vengeance.** *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus, p. 76.*

This is quite a disturbing paragraph, incredible really, consider they are using Jesus as the authority for their conclusions.

If they are going to cite Jesus and what Jesus did with this law, if they want to be honest, want to be true, shouldn’t they actually quote the very words and teachings of Jesus instead of citing Him, rightly recognizing that He would know the true purpose and meaning of the law, but then substituting their own ideas in place of His words?

This is what Jesus actually said in the Sermon on the Mount, see if this sounds like justice as vengeance to you?

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘**Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.**’ But **I tell you, Do not resist an evil person.** If someone strikes you on the right cheek, **turn to him the other also.** And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, **let him have your cloak** as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, **go with him two miles.** **Give** to the one who asks you, and **do not turn away** from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his **sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.** If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.** Matthew 5:38-48 NIV84, emphasis mine.

Does Jesus teach what the lesson attempts to tell us Jesus teaches? What does Jesus teach is the true meaning of this law?

And this takes us into

THURSDAY

lesson on vengeance.

If we want to use the idea of justice as vengeance, what is the design law view of this?

Who is Jesus at war with? Who is the prime enemy of Jesus? Satan, not human sinners! And if Jesus wants vengeance on Satan, what does He do? He hits Satan where it hurts him the most—and what is it that has been Satan’s primary goal since he started his rebellion? To replace God as the one worshiped and adored. In other words, as Isaiah tells us, Satan sought to rise up and be worshiped as God.

So, how would Jesus take vengeance upon Satan then? He takes Satan’s victims from him, He redeems sinners, He removes their sin, their fear, their selfishness. In other words, Jesus removes from the sinner the elements and attributes that make sinners like Satan and restores them to His likeness, He restores the image of God in sinners.

And this is done through the application of truth and love, through the design laws consistently being applied, which is what Jesus describes the Father doing, sending sunshine and rain, equally, the laws of nature are cited by Jesus and they do not discriminate, they treat everyone the same. So too God’s law of love and truth are constants, and we are to be conduits of His love and truth and shine His character and glory of truth and love on everyone in how we treat them.

And Isaiah confirms for us specifically that this is what God’s vengeance is:

- Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah, I will get relief from my foes and **avenge myself** on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; **I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.** Isaiah 1:24-15 NIV84, emphasis mine.

God is like a surgeon using a radiation knife to kill cancer cells—the attack, the vengeance, is against the sickness, the cancer, not the cancer patient. Likewise God takes vengeance against sin, the fear, selfishness, lies, not the sinner, for the purpose of healing, saving, redeeming, restoring, and thereby not only saving the sinner but removing from Satan his followers.

Doesn’t it break your heart to see the exact opposite of what Jesus taught being attributed to Jesus in the lesson?

It is time for the message of the 3 angels to go forward, to return to worshiping God as Creator, to come out of Babylon that system of imposed law with imposed punishments, and embrace the truth that God’s laws are design laws that He wants to restore into our hearts and minds as the basis of our existence, life, and operations.

Read the second paragraph, do you see the Roman law infection?

- Jesus was not against the principle of reward and punishment. Justice is a matter of principle; it is a crucial part of life. However, no individual is to take the role of judge, jury, and “executioner” upon himself or herself. How easy it would be for us to pervert justice! It is not

up to us to repay harm. If some evil is to be addressed, this must be performed by an objective court; it is the work of judges. *Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2025, Exodus*, p. 77.

This is talking about a crime, not civil law, not a dispute over property lines or inheritance, but the question of doing evil and the repayment of harm.

First, what method did Jesus, and does the Bible teach, about the principle of reward and punishment?

All of Jesus' parables taught design law, reality, how things work. The sower sows truth, but depending on the soil gets different results. This is how reality works, good soil brings forth good fruit when good seed is sown, gravel does not. And the soil represents the condition of the hearts of people, not the quality of the seeds of truth. There is a reward for receiving the truth into the heart, it is the transformation of the character and the productions of the fruits of the spirit; and there is a punishment for rejecting the truth, it is the hardening of the heart, warping of the character, developing the fruits of a demonic spirit, fear, guilt, shame, selfishness, and cutting oneself off from God, the source of life.

There is nothing more absolute and certain that God's design laws built into reality. They cannot be changed, we can be changed, but God and His laws cannot be changed. So, yes, Jesus believes in reward and punishment, but it is not artificial, it is the natural results of sowing into our hearts either truth and love or lies, fear, and selfishness. As Paul wrote,

- Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A **man reaps what he sows**. The one who **sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction**; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Galatians 6:8 NIV84, emphasis mine.

God is the Creator and He will not be mocked by the made-up system of rules and rule enforcement. You can teach all you want that this is a legal problem with made up rules and external punishments, but it doesn't change reality. And people will reap what they choose to sow into their hearts and minds, either truth, love, and trust or fear, lies, and selfishness.

Secondly, the authors also wrote,

- If some evil is to be addressed, this must be performed by an objective court; it is the work of judges.

Maybe I am misinformed, maybe I have misunderstood, but I was taught that the Old Testament legal justice system was set up with the injured person functioning in the role of prosecutor. The victim of the crime, or their family, had to bring the accused before the court, the state did not have police to do this. And then the court officials, judges and priests, were to act the role of defense attorneys, to cross examine the witnesses who were prosecuting the case against the accused.

In other words, the system was not set up like Roman courts with impartial judgments, but honest judges who were biased to find the truth and particularly biased toward defending the accused, but only through the investigation of the truth.

Our courts with impartial judges are not actually interested in finding the truth, they are interested in adhering to the application of the law, the rules, the legal proceedings, and thus impartial judges in our system will often knowingly make rules that suppress evidence and obstruct the truth because they are not primarily concerned with the life of the accused, but with the operations of the made up system of laws.

But God is the God of reality and the system He set up, even though with imposed laws, was to model, educate, teach, the principles of God's reality-based design law kingdom, which is love for the sinner, truth above all, and actions to seek to save and restore, not punish. Yes, if the truth was that the accused was guilty, then the judges would dispense the proper inflicted punishments for that society, just like reality works, if you are breaking the laws of health, you will reap that results unless God acts to heal and restore.

- One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If a malicious **witness** takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. **The judges must make a thorough investigation**, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 19:15-19 NIV84.

The judges interrogate the witnesses who are bringing the accusation, they act the role of defense attorneys to pick apart the witness and their testimony. They are not unbiased toward the legal proceedings, but biased toward acquittal.

Zechariah chapter three depicts this more clearly, Satan who is the accuser is bringing accusation against Joshua the high priest, and God rebukes Satan and then God removes the filthy garments from the high priest, which are symbolic of his sin-sick life founded in fear and selfishness, and dresses him in fine clothing, symbolic of the new life of Christ, the spirit of love and trust. Thus, God's justice is to silence the accuser and heal the sinner restoring the sinner into harmony with the design laws of truth, love, and trust upon which God built the universe to operate.

TUESDAY

The lesson does a good job of describing God's original plan was NOT for the people to go to war and fight and kill to take over the land, but God would go before them and the hornet would go before them and gradually the people in the land would move away and abandon it and the Jews would slowly take it over. But sadly, the people didn't trust Him to fulfill His plan.