

A note from Kathy

Responsibility and restitution are two words that often bring mixed emotions. We want others to take responsibility seriously, and do what is necessary for restitution when we are on the receiving end. Today we will see what God had to say to Israel about both of these subjects. This might be a good chapter to listen to read aloud as you read along. YouVersion is a wonderful app to have on your phone. You can have the Bible with you wherever you go. <https://www.bible.com/>

Observation

1. Exodus 22:1-4 deals with stolen oxen or sheep; why are these both highly valued properties?
2. If the animal is stolen and killed for its meat or sold to another, what is the penalty if the thief is caught?
3. If a thief breaks in under cover of darkness and is killed, what is the penalty for the one who is defending his property?
4. Why would the penalty be different for a thief who is killed in the daylight?
5. If a thief is found and the stolen animal is still in his possession, what is the penalty?
6. In verse 5, we see some carelessness on the part of someone grazing their livestock. They have trespassed onto someone else's field or vineyard. What is the penalty in this case? Pay close attention to the details here. Would this inspire one to be especially careful when grazing their cattle near a property line?
7. There are many reasons why a landowner might start a fire: warmth, protection at night, burning off weeds, but in any event, whatever the reason, what is the bottom line?

8. We see in verse 7 that it does not matter where a person's property is located. If a thief comes and takes it and is caught, what is the penalty?
9. Taking care of another person's property is a serious matter. If a thief breaks in and steals the property, but the thief is not found, how are they to handle this situation?
10. What is the purpose of taking a case before the judges?
11. If one is found having anything that does not belong to them, what is the penalty?
12. Exodus 22:10-15 deals with the care of an animal given to another for safekeeping. Perhaps the person is unable to care for the animal because of ill health or personal responsibilities; whatever the reason, they have agreed that the friend would take this responsibility on. What is required if the animal dies or is injured or stolen?
13. Exodus 22:16-31 begins a new area of responsibility. It deals with the obligation of an individual in order to benefit all. What overall theme do you see in these verses?
14. What aspect of God's character do you see in verses 16-31?
15. In spite of the abundant wealth they took out of Egypt, there were still those who might have little and be in need of some help. How desperate is the person in verse 26? What is the only thing he has to offer?
16. Verse 28 is very clear, "Do not blaspheme God." Do not treat him or his word disrespectfully in word or deed. But then the verse goes on to say "or curse the ruler of your people." Why do you believe these are both in the same stated command?
17. Verse 29 has to do with the blessings of God. What are the specific commands given concerning offerings to God? How does this relate to the position they give God in their hearts?
18. In verse 31, God refers to them as "my holy people." What do you believe this means?

Application

1. In this chapter we see the word “restitution” over and over. Define this word.
2. Have you ever had to make restitution to someone?
3. If we respect another person’s property with the fervor we see in Exodus 22, do you think we will enjoy a greater harmony in our community?
4. Can you come up with ways to teach this in your home?
One of my favorite quotes is from Frederick Douglass, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."
5. When our carelessness causes harm to another person, is saying “I’m sorry” really enough?
6. Has anyone ever given you something to take care of for them? Perhaps they did not have a pocket and asked you to hold their money, or needed a place to store some of their belongings for a time. If you said yes what was your responsibility?
7. Finding yourself before a judge can be a scary or a comforting thing. His ruling is to be final. He is to be the one who will listen, without bias, to both sides of the dispute. How important is it for the judge to listen carefully and rule righteously?
8. In verses 18, 19 and 20, we see the death penalty given as the course of justice. Consider these three judgments for a few minute;, what would the eventual outcome be if these persons were left alive? Who were these individuals directly opposing?
9. I love the focus in verses 21-24. God calls them to remember where they had been, and how he had heard their cries and delivered them from the hand of their oppressors. In light of this, how were they instructed to deal with foreigners and those who were helpless? Has anything changed? What are you doing to help those less fortunate, those who are without means to defend and adequately care for themselves?

- 10.** You have probably heard the line from Shakespeare, “neither the borrower or the lender be,” but in God’s economy, we are to take both rolls seriously and with compassion. When you lend to someone, do you try to take in all aspects of their needs or only how they can repay the loan?
- 11.** In Matthew 5:42, the sermon on the mount, Jesus taught, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.” How is this type of life different from the world? The world often responds like a small child when asked to share their candy, “no get your own.”
- 12.** Have you ever gotten a late notice in the mail? Most of us have at one time or another. It may not mean you did not have the funds to meet the requirement, but that you were not paying attention to the details of your bills and you forgot to pay it. What does God’s word say about offerings brought to him? What is his position to be in our hearts?
- 13.** We are to be God’s holy people. What will that look like? Ponder this for awhile; don’t answer this question too quickly. You might even want to use this thought as the glasses you put on in order to view all situations this week. Fill in the blank; I will respond to _____ as one who is God’s holy person.