

## **Exod 04-02-01b**

Let's resume our study now in Exodus chapter 21. We pick up at verse 12. The laws concerning violence begin with those that are punishable by death.

We reviewed those. And of course, striking a man so that he dies in the murder sense of the word is what is in view. Turn with me to Numbers chapter 35 where a fuller instruction is detailed for us on this subject.

Numbers chapter 35 tells us about both intentional and unintentional taking of human life. This is what I mentioned earlier regarding the cities of refuge. Numbers 35, beginning in verse 10, speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, when you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge that the man slayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there.

The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger so that the man slayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial. The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. These are the initial six.

There ends up being about four per tribe, ultimately, about 48 of them. You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan. They are to be cities of refuge.

These six cities will be refuge for the sons of Israel, for the alien, the sojourner among them. Anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there. But, verse 16, here's our passage.

If he struck him down with an iron object so that he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. What I find intriguing about this particular specification, and it has caused great gouting spouts of ink to be spilled, is the mention of iron here, because 1440 B.C., according to your ancient Near Eastern archaeologists, is in the bronze period.

You have early bronze, middle bronze, and late bronze, and you don't really get into the iron phase until later. People will cite some 400 years after this time, the reign of Saul, where the Philistines are able to maintain a monopoly on ironworking, so that there are only two iron swords in all of Israel, and they say this is an anachronism, this is an evidence that material was added to the Pentateuch and added to the law much later, because it says if someone strikes someone with iron, and they would claim we don't have iron this early. Should you be reading the Biblical Archaeology Review or some other purported source of great knowledge on this subject, this is what I have to say about that.

Archaeology in the ancient Near East, and in Israel in particular, has been heavily influenced by theology, and many of the archaeologists and those who influence the archaeologists are from the camp that says there was no exodus, there was no great deliverance, there was no crossing of the Red Sea, there was no pillar of cloud, there was no Mount Sinai, there was a gradual influx, gradual migration of the Hebrews, and they say, the reason we know this is when we go

back to our layers for 1440 BC, we don't find big occupation layers. When we go back to 1400 BC or we go to 1400-1300 BC, which is supposedly the time of the conquest, we don't find evidence of a change in pottery and a change in occupation styles and so on that would indicate that there was a big influx of people at that time. Well, this is going in, digging up a column of dirt, and assigning the layers to years, and then looking in the layer that you have assigned to 1400-1300 and saying, I don't see any Israelites here, and letting that determine the truth of scripture, rather than looking in the column of dirt, finding the layer of occupation that indicates there was a radical change, which they have found at Tel Dan and Hatzor and many other archaeological sites, they do find an influx and a big change at a certain period of time, but they have assigned it to the wrong years.

And so they dismiss this and say, well, I've assigned 1400-1300 to here, and I don't see an occupation layer. Well, you're wrong. You got your column wrong.

Look at your Bible and adjust your archaeology to match the Word of God, but they won't do that. So everything is fouled up. Thus, they don't find iron until much later, because they don't find the Israelite occupation until much later, partly because they're using a flawed Egyptian chronology, which we've talked about in Fundamentals, and partly because they think that the Exodus did not take place until, if there was any such thing or any migration of any note, until around 1000 BC, or even later, and that all of this has been backdated, it's mythology, and, well, I don't have time to fool with all of that, but trust me, when they talk about the archaeological ages and early, middle, and late bronze, they're off.

And there was already iron, and there was already iron working in the Middle East, in the Ancient Near East, in Canaan, and in Egypt, and in Israel, before the archaeologists say it was. And this is one of the ways we know that. A typical murder weapon in Israel was made of iron.

Now, why was there a monotony? We know that there are, in fact, 400 years separating Sinai from Saul, so how could there only be two iron swords in Israel if they've had iron all along? Early iron working was primitive, and they couldn't make anything very big. They hadn't learned how to temper it. It was sort of like cast iron, and it made lousy swords.

It made pretty good dagger blades. It made good small implements, hooks, and plow points, and things like that. But it took them a while, it took them a few centuries, to learn how to work iron sufficiently to make a long sword that was worth anything.

First time or two they said, boy, if I get enough of this iron together, make me a sword. And he went out there and hit somebody with a bronze sword, it just snapped off. It was like a cast iron thing.

And they said, well, this isn't what we need in battle, and so they would just use it for tips and points and small things. So it's a good small murder weapon. They're not really, evidently, not making swords and larger pieces out of it yet.

Alright, so, struck him down with an iron object. This is something you can hold in one hand. It's a dagger, it's a spear, it's a lump, it could be almost anything made of iron.

So that he dies. He is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death.

Why would he be automatically a murderer if he strikes him down with an iron object? Because iron objects are not just common as dirt at this time. They're kind of a specialty item. And you didn't accidentally strike someone with a piece of iron.

You weren't just practicing your ballet moves and had a piece of iron in your hand and turned backward and hit the guy in the head accidentally. Just the fact of having this relatively new technology in your hand, this sharp object, that you club or stab someone with, is an indication of mal-intent ahead of time. If he strikes him down with a stone in the hand, verse 17 of Numbers 35, so that he dies.

And as a result, he dies. He is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death.

Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and he dies. In other words, striking him, there is a possibility of death. Someone could argue, well, I didn't mean to hit him that hard.

I just wanted to knock him unconscious. I just wanted to, as I like to say, put the mannikin on him. You had to be there and watch Mannix.

I just wanted to knock him unconscious. I didn't want to kill him. But if there is a reasonable expectation that by using this iron or this stone or this wood, he might die, and he does die, you're a murderer.

The murderer shall surely be put to death. The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death. He shall put him to death when he meets him.

The avenger of blood is a family member. This is not a community stoning. Why? Well, if the man flees, you're going to have a whole community running after him and trying to chase him down and pelt him with rocks.

No. The avenger of blood is from the family of the deceased, and he is the proxy. He's the representative of the community.

He can go meet the man. It says where he meets him. Now, he may try to meet him.

He may accidentally meet him. It's up to the avenger. It's up to the family and up to the community how badly they want to get this guy.

But the avenger of blood is the deputy. He can go hunt the guy down. And if he catches him before he gets to the city of refuge to plead his case, too bad for him.

So, if someone committed manslaughter, or what they want to argue is manslaughter, they had better hot-foot it to the city of refuge immediately, because there's just no mercy. The law of God says the avenger of blood can get you when he meets you. So, the whole idea of this long, drawn-out trial process we have, someone gets arrested and maybe two years later they come to trial, and five years later, after all their appeals are exhausted, they get sentenced, and then it gets, you know, in Israel, things happen really fast.

They have no jails. There's no such thing as a prison or incarceration in Israel. So, what do you do? You either are on the scene of the crime, or you're on your way to the city of refuge, or you're dead.

You just don't have an incarceration issue. You don't have to collect extra taxes and fund a life of ease for criminals for all the rest of their life. Which is what we do.

Many people get so used to life inside, and they can't function outside, they will go intentionally commit a crime to get locked away, because it's easier. Everything is done for them. I don't have to worry about my food, my clothing, my shelter, my activities.

It's all done for me. And these are the people who would otherwise be homeless, or would... This is why they are criminals. They don't conform to any normal calling in life.

But in Israel, you couldn't live that way. Because if you were homeless, you would starve. And you had to... Even the charity system in Israel required you to work.

You had to do your own gleaning, and threshing, and grinding, and baking, and so on. There was no welfare system as such in Israel. And there was no incarceration.

And you notice there's not a big multi-tiered appeal system either. There's one court. And you get one chance to make it to that court if you take a life.

And you better get there fast. You better make your case fast. Otherwise, the Avenger of Blood has the right to strike you down.

And if you're slow, or if you're apathetic, well, it's on your own head. The Blood Avenger shall put the murderer to death. Put him to death when he meets him.

Verse 20. If he pushed him out of hatred or threw something at him lying in wait, and as a result, he died. Or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and as a result, he died.

The one who struck him shall surely be put to death. He is a murderer. The Blood Avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

Time and place of the Avenger's choosing. Which, of course, gives sort of an ominous tone to the remaining life of the murderer. Because he doesn't know where or when the guy's going to catch up with him.

He can turn a corner. There he is. And any means available.

He can kill him by whatever means he sees fit. He can lasso him and drag him behind an ox. He can just do whatever.

It does not specify. The Avenger of Blood can make it quick or make it slow. It's not a pretty thing to be a murderer under sentence of death in Israel.

Because the Avenger of Blood, if you particularly nasty in the way you murdered a man, well, the Avenger of Blood can be particularly nasty in the way he executes his duty. So, in an altercation, someone loses their head and they say, well, it was momentary insanity. I just lost my head for a moment and pushed him.

I didn't mean to kill him. I just had a flash of anger and I pushed him. But I didn't want him dead.

Law of God says, too bad. You should have learned to control your temper. Because even though you had this flash and you say, well, I wasn't responsible at that moment.

You know, we have that argument in our law. No such thing in Israel. If you push him out of hatred.

If you throw something at him lying in wait, because you were just in a passion. God says, I don't care about your passion. You killed the man.

You're under sentence of death. No excuse. But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity or threw something at him without lying in wait or with any deadly object of stone and without seeing, dropped it on him so that he died.

You're up working on the roof. You drop a block, strikes the man and he dies. It wasn't enmity involved.

Then he was not his enemy. He was not seeking his car. The congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood.

According to these judgments, the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood. The congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled. And he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

Anytime blood is shed, anytime a life is lost, accidental or on purpose, you've got to go to the city of refuge if you want to make your case for manslaughter. You can imagine that many murderers might have just fled altogether if they knew they would never convince the congregation that it was not premeditated. What would they do? Flee and go live in some Canaanite land.

Well, all the better. If you're not in Israel, you're no longer an issue. You're gone.

This is where we have our criminals fleeing the country and going to South America or going to Europe or going to some other far off place, hoping they won't get extradited. Well, the benefit is the same to the community. That cancer, that rot in the fabric of the community has been eliminated.

Although the avenger of blood, under the law of Israel, can hound him to the far corners of the earth and wherever he finds him, he can slay him. So he can go to Madagascar or India or China or any place, hunt him down and kill him. So the congregation delivers the manslayer.

The manslayer from the family is going to go seeking justice, seeking vengeance in some cases. The congregation can call him off and say, no, this man gets immunity. He dwells in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

Not just any old high priest, not somebody who says, hi there, I'm the high priest. We have people today saying they're apostles and saying they're bishops. And the man can hire a guy and say, call yourself the high priest and then I kill the other guy, I'll kill you and then I can go home.

That's not it. It has to be the official... Well, you get the idea. You can't go home until the high priest dies.

The high priest has got all these murderers waiting to go home and waiting for his death. You wonder, did it once, I can do it again. But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of the city of refuge and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood.

You actually have a case like this later on in the reign of David where he sends a guy out, actually Solomon does, under instructions from his father David. He says, I will let you live, but you need to go to the city of refuge. Well, the guy decides to come back because he has a slave that ran off or something and he is executed.

What does this say? If someone is in fact guilty of an accidental death, that means that they didn't do it on purpose and they have self-control. It is a manifestation of your innocence that you live a life of self-control and that you can follow instructions and you can live within limits. Someone who says it was an accident and maybe there aren't enough witnesses to prove it one way or the other, so the congregation says you can live in the city of refuge, if this is a person who is out of control, if this is a person who really can't live within limits, they are going to break their parole.

They are going to go outside the city and that avenger of blood is going to kill them. Living a life within limits is a principle of the Word of God. Recognizing authority, recognizing instructions and having the good sense, the self-control and the discipline to live within a set of rules, a set of guidelines, this is a part of being a godly man or a godly woman.

And all of the things we saw in our scripture reading this morning over in Malachi chapter 2

apply. If you cannot control yourself... I have a book up on my shelf, I've told you about it before. Self-control, it's kingship and majesty.

It's a book that was published over a hundred years ago and I've read some of the inside of the book, but I just like the title. Self-control, it's kingship and majesty. There is not a greater gift that you can impart to a child, there is not a greater characteristic that you can exhibit as a human being than self-control.

James talks about it, if a man can bridle his tongue, he's got his whole body under control. Self-control, living in the city of refuge on parole is a manifestation of self-control. And when you demonstrate that you don't have self-control or you are rebellious and you're going to break that promise, break that parole, your life is in your hands.

Your life is in the hands of the avenger of blood. If the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, verse 27, he shall not be guilty of blood because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. That's what he should have done.

If he doesn't do what he should do, his life can be forfeit. After the death of the high priest, the manslayer may return to the land of his possession. These things shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses. One witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for death. You can't just have your neighbor who wants your land say, oh, I saw him kill old Nebat over there and they stone you and then he gets your property.

It has to be the testimony of multiple witnesses. You shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. In this way, you will not pollute the land where you are.

Blood defiles the land. No atonement can be made for the land. For the blood that is shed on it, no atonement can be made unless it is by the blood of the one who shed it.

Therefore, let's avoid this whole situation. Do not defile the land which you inhabit in the midst of which I dwell, for I, the Lord, dwell among the children of Israel. What did Jesus have to say with regard to murder? What did he say was equivalent to murder? Hatred in the heart.

Hatred is equivalent to murder. In our age, in our environment, in our lives, to develop a hatred for another person is equivalent to murder. And the same principles apply.

God will not dwell where the land is defiled with blood. This is why the scripture over and over emphasizes forgiveness and not bearing a grudge. Because bearing a grudge is a form of hatred.

If you cannot forgive others, the Bible says, you yourself are not forgiven. We have to find a way

to view wrongs that are done, whether toward us or toward those we love or whatever. We have to find, through God's grace, a way to forgive and a way to let go and not bear a grudge because our forgiveness depends on it.

And that is pictured in these regulations regarding murder. That is a function of self-control as well, to not let our mind run on injustices and wrongs that have been done against us. It's a whole lot easier for us to dwell on those than the ones that we have committed against others.

We don't have our mind just run on and on about, oh, what a no-goodnik I am for what I did to this other person. We tend to look at the ones that happened to us. But this gets into the realm of hatred.

We tend to think of hatred as an emotional, you know, I hate green peppers or something like that. I don't hate the peppers. I hate the taste of the green peppers.

You can just cut open a green pepper in the house and I can tell that there's one there. There's some kind of a chemical repelling effect for me and green peppers. But, you know, there's some things we say, oh, I hate that.

And it's really an emotion. Hatred is a policy. Just as love, in its purest sense, is a policy.

Loyalty, self-sacrifice, devotion are components of love that go way beyond emotion. And in the same way, disregard, disrespect, grudge-bearing and lack of forgiveness are components that make up hatred. And if we find ourselves, anytime our mind turns to a certain person or a certain group or a certain area where we feel that wrong has been done and we find no forgiveness and the bearing of a grudge, the sun goes down on our anger, this is hatred and it is murder.

And these principles reflect God's attitude toward it. We will lose our blessings. We will lose the abiding blessing that comes from the presence of God in these cases.

So no light thing here. When we look at capital punishment in Israel, God is saying, this is a serious issue. So I don't think any of us are going to run off and club somebody over the head with iron or stone or wood physically, but we can certainly do it mentally.

We can do it in our hearts. And Jesus said, the things that happen in your heart, it's all the same as if it happened out in the overt realm. Well, back to Exodus chapter 21.

If a man acts with premeditation to kill him by treachery, take him from the altar that he may die. We talked about striking the father or the mother. Verse 16, he who kidnaps a man and sells him or if the man is found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

Why is kidnapping on a level with murder? Because when you kidnap someone, you have removed them from their freedom, their privacy, their property. You basically take everything away from them. Why would someone kidnap someone else? What is the purpose in the

ancient world? Sell them into slavery.

There was no ransoming, at least no examples that are known from ancient times. People were kidnapped to be sold, to be sold into slavery. And this was the equivalent of having killed them.

This is the picture in the life of Joseph. When the bloody coat is taken to Jacob, this is essentially his death. And as it foreshadows the death of Jesus Christ, and yet he is in a sense brought back to life to deliver his people, Joseph is and the Lord Jesus is the same.

But that kidnapping and selling into slavery is a picture of death. It is parallel to death and it is penalized as though someone has been murdered. Even if you recover the guy, you go and sneak up on the caravan and rescue the man.

If he is found in his hand, that kidnapper dies. You can imagine there weren't really kidnapping rings or slavery rings in Israel under this ban because anyone caught was killed. And that tends to snuff out your business ventures when everybody that is doing it gets killed.

He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. This is interestingly connected with violence. All of these, remember we categorized this, this capital events is related to violence.

Violence done in the physical realm and yet cursing father and mother is grouped in here with acts of physical violence. This is how seriously God takes that attitude. Now we come to one of the more famous sections of scripture when it comes to particularly the abortion controversy.

Starting in verse 18. If men contend with each other and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed.

This is compensation. This is restitution. In the sense of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, what's known as *lex talionis* which is the Latin term that means the law of equivalency, the law of reparation.

If you wound someone, he loses time, he loses income. You not only pay for his loss of income but you also pay his medical expense. Notice there is no mutual of Omaha in Israel.

There is no health insurance policy. So if you develop a tumor, if you fall in a hole and break a leg and all of the other things that could happen to you in terms of loss of health and loss of income, God doesn't set up an insurance company. He does say if someone is responsible for your injury, if someone is responsible for your incapacity, then he will foot the bill for your loss and your recovery.

What's particularly interesting about this is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Because the Samaritan, in picking up the man who has been mugged on the road to Jericho, takes him to

the inn and he pays for his care. He takes responsibility in the same way he would have had he himself been responsible.

He acts like a man should have who would have actually done the mugging in that sense. And it is a great picture of selflessness and of sacrifice that he's not obligated to do that, but he fills in for the ones who should have paid the restitution and are not there. He takes their place.

He is their substitute and their proxy in the sense of restoring the man to health in Jesus' parable. Verse 20, If a man beats his male or female servant with a rod so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notice it does not say he shall surely be put to death.

It says he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he, the slave, remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his property. So he could literally beat a slave within an inch of his life and as long as the slave does not die, the master is not punished.

What do you think about that? He can whip him. He can abuse him. He can commit many of the egregious actions that are put to the fore as being the worst examples of abuse in slavery here in our own country.

But if the man does not die, the master is not punished by the community. Who do you think is keeping account in situations like this? The community does not judge. God Himself will keep track and will judge this area.

It doesn't mean He is not punished at all or that He gets off scot-free or that it's not a crime. This is outside the realm of responsibility of the community to redress. This is going to be an issue directly between the man and his God.

And I would rather have a rule that tells the community what they can and can't do than to fall into the hands of the living God for punishment. This is actually worse. But what this points out for us is the law is not designed to ensure justice.

That's not the purpose of this code of law. What is the purpose of this code of law? It is to protect and preserve the community. It is to ensure the health and well-being of the community.

It is not the final dispensation of justice. It may be that a man killed a man with premeditation but there's only one witness or no witnesses. He goes to the city of refuge and he lives there for years and he doesn't suffer the penalty of death that he should get.

The law doesn't make a provision for that. As long as he doesn't break his parole, he can live in the city of refuge when he's actually worthy of death. This man can beat his slave within an inch of his life.

He can break his bones. He can flay his flesh. He can abuse him.

He could be in a coma but he's not dead. If he lives even in a coma for a day or two and is still

breathing, the man is not punished by the community because God's goal in giving the law to Israel is not the dispensation of justice. Only God can do that.

These rules are preservation of the community. This is why cursing father and mother is punishable by death because that is a threat to the community on a level with turning a murderer loose. The cities of refuge are a place of containment, sort of a place to keep possible murderers or those who have shed blood from contaminating the community, from preventing God from blessing the rest of Israel.

They're confined and contained within that city. Beat his male or female servant with a rod so that he dies under his hand. He shall surely be punished.

If he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his property. The man is accountable and responsible for his property to God just as you and I are accountable and responsible to God. Regardless of whether or not we break a law or don't break a law, we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ in our dispensation.

Verse 22, If men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely is how they translate it here. Yet no harm follows. He shall surely be punished according as the woman's husband imposes on him and he shall pay as the judges determine.

But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. Well, there is great controversy. People have picked apart the Hebrew here trying to determine whether or not causing an unborn child to perish constitutes a capital offense, meaning that it is murder.

And the popular idea in the conservative Christian community is that abortion is murder. You have taken a human life. You have pastors who are men of faith and men of the Word of God who look at both sides of this issue.

Some believe from the Word of God that human life in the full sense begins at birth because of the neshama, God bending down and breathing into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul. I tend to look at and I freely admit that there are different opinions and they are only opinions. I don't think anyone can prove their case beyond a shadow of a doubt.

We have to hold our beliefs before the Lord. I am of that camp. I think that full human life begins at the point that a baby starts breathing on its own.

If it is premature and it is only six months old and it is on a respirator, if it is not in the amniotic fluid, if it is not inside its mother's womb and it is respirating, it is alive, it is a human soul, it is a human life at that point. But it is really sort of a technicality because of this. Abortion is not a matter of whether or not it is technically a murder.

I look at it this way. God formed Adam's body out of the dust of the ground. He shaped it.

He molded it in his own image, after his own likeness. He completed that body. When the body was complete, he breathed the breath of life into it.

He created the body and then he hit the on switch. He booted it up. He powered it up and put life in it.

In the same way, when you go to the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, the Son of Man prophesied to these bones. The flesh, the sinews, the skin goes on them. Then he says, prophesy again and the Spirit comes and makes them alive.

The bodies are formed. Then the life is imputed. The life is inspired into them.

I think this is the model of Scripture. However, let me ask you this. If Satan or one of the angels had come along while God was in the process of forming Adam's body out of the dust of the ground and had done like people do to sand castles on the beach and just kicked it all apart and made big footprints in it, how happy do you think God would be with that action? Whether or not it is a murder to interfere with the creative process of God in the construction of the human body, I think is a serious interference with the creative act of God.

And I think to ask whether or not it is murder is to ask the wrong question. Is it pleasing to God? That is the question. Can you really stand before God and say, Lord, I did the right thing in taking this unborn child and severing its head or vacuuming it out or burning it to lifelessness with acid or all of the other methods they use for abortion.

I don't really think it is an issue whether it's murder or not. The issue is, can you stand before God and run a film of that process and justify yourself? I think not. If you can find a case where it is justifiable, take your case to God.

That's the issue. So here, people come to this passage and try to make a case. Well, and the Hebrew is indeterminate.

I think God left it that way on purpose because we have to stand before God. This law is not designed to execute complete justice. This law is designed to protect the community.

And if men struggle and hurt a woman with child so that she loses the fruit of her womb, the penalty depends on the outcome. If the child is born early and lives, no further harm, then the husband determines the damages. You frighten my wife.

You bruise my wife. You cause my child distress. It was born some weeks early.

The husband gets to determine the penalty. But if any further harm followed, meaning that the child comes out and is now born dead where it would have been born alive, life for life. And a man, two men struggling, even inadvertently, they knock the woman down and she has a miscarriage and the child is not alive.

That's harm. And it is... The child could have been born crippled. You remember the infant was

dropped and was crippled, the king.

Compensation is lex talionis. Tooth for tooth, life for life. You have all these lists.

Well, this is what we'll pick up next time. But if there's one thing, remember, we have a responsibility before the Lord for the truth of God. It isn't to be taken lightly.

Think about that chapter in Malachi. God takes our obedience and the attention we give to his word personally. And it isn't a matter of being optional.

It is a matter of requirement. It's a matter of calling. And it's an opportunity.

It is a great opportunity to serve, to bless, and be blessed. Let's close in prayer. Father, thank you for the clear way you have expressed your will for us in your word.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister it to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.