

Assembly of Eloah

This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

The Eighth Commandment

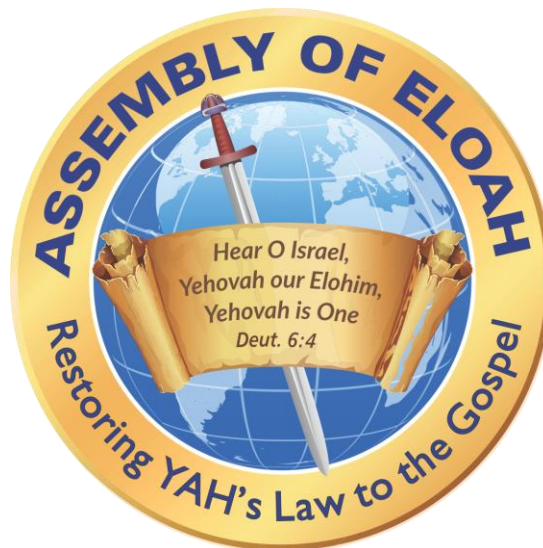
You shall not steal

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Exodus 20:15 & Deuteronomy 5:19 "You shall not steal"

This paper explains the Law of God, as applied to the 8th Commandment, explained by the Torah, Prophets, Writings and the Renewed Covenant for the reading of the Law in the Sabbath year 2012.



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You Shall not Steal

Exodus 20:15 "You shall not steal".

Deuteronomy 5:19 " And you shall not steal".

STEAL, stole; stolen

(From Webster's 1828 Dictionary.)

1. To take and carry away feloniously, as the personal goods of another. To constitute stealing or theft, the taking must be felonious, that is, with an intent to take what belongs to another, and without his consent.

2. To Withdraw or convey without notice or clandestinely.

They could insinuate and steal themselves under the same by submission.

3. To gain or win by address or gradual and imperceptible means.

Variety of objects has a tendency to steal away the mind from its steady pursuit of any subject.

Everything is owned by Y^ehovah.

All things are the property of Y^ehovah. He has established laws that deal with the proper handling of His property. He has given us laws to determine how we are to use his creation and what in creation is permissible for our use.

There are laws concerning the land and what we may do with it; there are laws concerning food and what we may eat of it; there are laws concerning the parts of the produce of the earth that we may eat and for those parts set aside for God's purposes in the function of the creation.

Creation

The creation – the earth and its fullness – is God's possession. He has given man dominion over the creation and all that is in it to subjugate it, and to keep and protect it within God's plan (Gen. 1:26-31; Ps. 24:1; 50:12; 1Cor. 10:26-28).

Exodus 9:29 Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to Y^ehovah (the LORD). The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is Y^ehovah's (the LORD).

Our future is to become gods or elohim, but this is according to God's will and not by theft. This issue was at the heart of the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:5). Seeking to grasp equality with God is theft. We are all predestined, chosen, called, justified and glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). We will put on the new man, being renewed in knowledge. It is freely given and not obtained by theft. (Col. 3:10).

Acts 2:41-47 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:19-23 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

The elect are those who seek the will of Y^ehovah in sincerity and truth (1Cor. 5:8). The world order has corrupted the word of God and has changed times and the law. It has removed the word of God and attempted to steal the gift of eternal life which was freely given to those who God has called according to His purpose.

Y^ehovah wants obedience more than sacrifice.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

What does Y^ehovah require of us?

Deut. 10:12-17 "And now, Israel, what does Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God require of you, but to fear Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of Y^ehovah (the LORD), which I am commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet Y^ehovah (the LORD) set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring

after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. ¹⁷ For Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.

We are to keep the Law of Y^ehovah in its completeness and correct application.

Y^ehovah has established a calendar for his creation. It works according to the astronomical calculations and the conjunction of the New Moon. Failure to follow the correct calendar is a theft of Y^ehovah's time.

Disregarding the Sabbath or keeping it on a day other than the 7th day is theft as well. Every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Law is to be read and studied. Failure to keep the calendar of Y^ehovah and to study his law and worship him is a theft of His holy time. Y^ehovah requires his children to worship Him in spirit and in truth. (Jn. 4:24)

The Temple and the Tabernacle

Exodus 36:1-7 "Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom Y^ehovah (the LORD) has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that Y^ehovah (the LORD) has commanded." ² And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind Y^ehovah (the LORD) had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work. ³ And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, ⁴ so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, ⁵ and

said to Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that Y^ehovah (the LORD) has commanded us to do." ⁶ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, ⁷ for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.

The Temple as well as the Tabernacle in the wilderness was made of things freely given. Y^ehovah has given us our wealth and abilities. We should not neglect to use the skills our Father has given us.

Offerings and tithes are not to be withheld, which is robbery.

Exodus 22:29 "You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me.

Mal. 3:1-18 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to Y^ehovah (the LORD). ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to Y^ehovah (the LORD) as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear

me, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts. ⁶ "For I Y^ehovah (the LORD) do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷ From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' ⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts. ¹³ "Your words have been hard against me, says Y^ehovah (the LORD). But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts? ¹⁵ And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'" ¹⁶ Then those who feared Y^ehovah (the LORD) spoke with one another. Y^ehovah (The LORD) paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared Y^ehovah (the LORD) and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ "They shall be mine, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

We steal from our Father Y^ehovah when we do not tithe and give our offerings.

We are called to test Y^ehovah on this fact, which when we tithe, He will open up the windows of blessings. We are commanded to obey the law of Y^ehovah, which changes not; if we do, then blessings will follow. If we disobey, then we are subject to the curses as individuals and as a nation.

(Compare chapters 28-30 in Deuteronomy.)

On the eighth day all of Israel's young are to be given to God: The males and all the firstlings of the flock.

Deut. 12:5-16 But you shall seek the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, ⁶ and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. ⁷ And there you shall eat before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God has blessed you. ⁸ "You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes, ⁹ for you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you. ¹⁰ But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, ¹¹ then to the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to Y^ehovah (the LORD). ¹² And you shall rejoice before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, you and your

sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. ¹³ Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, ¹⁴ but at the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you. ¹⁵ "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer. ¹⁶ Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

Exodus 23:17-19 Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Y^ehovah (the LORD) GOD. ¹⁸ "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the fat of my feast remain until the morning. ¹⁹ "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Failing to appear before Y^ehovah at his three commanded Feasts with your offering is theft.

Exodus 34:19-20 All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep. ²⁰ The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty-handed.

Everything belongs to our Elohim and we must not neglect the firstborn and the first fruits.

Exodus 34:23-26 Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Y^ehovah (the LORD) God, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge

your borders; no one shall covet your land, when you go up to appear before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God three times in the year. ²⁵ "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover remain until the morning. ²⁶ The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

Num. 18:20-32 And Y^ehovah (the LORD) said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel. ²¹ "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting, ²² so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. ²³ But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance. ²⁴ For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to Y^ehovah (the LORD), I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel." ²⁵ And Y^ehovah (the LORD) spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁶ "Moreover, you shall speak and say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe that I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution from it to Y^ehovah (the LORD), a tithe of the tithe. ²⁷ And your contribution shall be counted to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. ²⁸ So you shall also present a contribution to Y^ehovah (the LORD) from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel. And from it you shall give Y^ehovah's (the LORD's) contribution to Aaron the priest. ²⁹ Out of all the gifts to you, you shall present every contribution due to Y^ehovah (the LORD); from each its best part is to be

dedicated.' ³⁰ Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be counted to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the winepress. ³¹ And you may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. ³² And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have contributed the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, lest you die.'"

Offerings are to be of the best quality and are not to be polluted. Polluting our offering, or failing to provide a pure offering is theft

Deut. 14:22-29 "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. ²³ And before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God always. ²⁴ And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God chooses, to set his name there, ²⁵ then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God chooses ²⁶ and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God and rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you. ²⁸ "At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. ²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall

come and eat and be filled, that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

The second tithe is set aside for enjoyment at the Feasts of Y^ehovah which are mandatory. You may convert your tithes to money and purchase the desired items upon arrival. We must also bring our offering before the start of the Feast.

The withholding of tithes is theft. Where a person needs to redeem a tithe to use it for his own purpose, then the tithe redemption carries with it a penalty. If any tithes are redeemed the penalty is that the person who redeems or withholds has to add a fifth part to it. If the tithes are used for any purpose other than commanded by law there is a twenty percent penalty added.

The Jubilee System

Lev. 25:1-11 Y^ehovah (The LORD) spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, ² "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to Y^ehovah (the LORD). ³ For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to Y^ehovah (the LORD). You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. ⁵ You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. ⁶ The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired worker and the sojourner who lives with you, ⁷ and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land: all its yield shall be for food. ⁸ "You

shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. ⁹ Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. ¹¹ That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines.

These are the responsibilities concerning the ownership of the land.

Lev. 25:23-28 "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. ²⁴ And in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land. ²⁵ "If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. ²⁶ If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, ²⁷ let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property. ²⁸ But if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

Land outside of a "walled" city may not be sold in perpetuity. There are also limitations on the structure of the land ownership; these vary with responsibilities. (Lev. 25:29-34)

The distinction in walled and unwalled cities makes a decision as to the capacity

to be redeemed and be part of the jubilee restoration. Only the houses of walled towns may be sold in perpetuity. The cities of the Priests and the cities of refuge may not be sold in perpetuity but may be redeemed at any time by the priests. No land system outside of a walled town, or country villages or unwalled cities may be removed from the jubilee system. This distinction goes to the law regarding restoration and restitution and ownership. A person in a city selling in perpetuity may redeem their property within one year of sale. Otherwise it goes to ownership in perpetuity. No other real estate may be sold in perpetuity.

When the nation is established the rights of people to their inheritance are made by boundary and survey. Moving a boundary is theft.

Deut. 19:14 "You shall not move your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in the inheritance that you will hold in the land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you to possess.

The removal of landmarks and entering the fields of the fatherless is theft, or an indication of an intention to steal. Y^ehovah will defend the fatherless; but the magistrates have responsibility to deal with such action under the law.

People often fall on hard times and suffer for that fact. There are several pieces of legislation that require us to protect the individual, and failure to exercise our responsibilities to each other is also a form of theft.

Lev. 25:35-43 "If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you. ³⁶ Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. ³⁷ You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. ³⁸ I am Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God. ³⁹ "If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: ⁴⁰ he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. ⁴¹ Then he shall go out from you, he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers. ⁴² For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. ⁴³ You shall not rule over him ruthlessly but shall fear your God.

No person within the nation can be a bondservant or be made to serve unduly. That has a far reaching effect now that the Gentiles have been brought into the Kingdom of God.

Failure to deal justly with the time and labor of those of Israel is theft. Thus there is a necessity for justice in the area of labor and industrial law that flows from these commandments. God, and not any man, owns Israel and so all of Israel, both native born and of the Gentiles in conversion, are the Lord's possession and are not bond slaves. Nor can they be sold as bond slaves by any person or body in or of the nation.

This law will be restored in Israel and the Jubilee system will be restored according to the word of the Y^ehovah, which He

spoke through His servant Jeremiah (Jer. 32:6-44).

We are not to fall short in the offerings to Y^ehovah (Num. 15:1-12). If we have fallen short in ignorance, then atonement is to be made (Num. 15:17-28). However, none can redeem his brother, only Christ (Ps. 49:6-7).

Debts and release

Associated with the safeguard of the prohibitions against usury is the Sabbath year release of all debt.

The entire system is designed to release the individual from debt and servitude every seven years. Failure to ensure this law is carried out is sin and undermines the freedom of the individual and the nation in God's Law. The desire to remain in slavery is a consequence of sin affecting individuals in the system.

We are not to oppress any of the strangers, or the widows, or the fatherless, or Yehovah will hear their cry and make the oppressors' wives widows and their children fatherless from war (Ex. 22: 21-24; 23:9). We will not provoke the stranger but he shall live among us, and we shall love him as one of our own for we were strangers also in Egypt (Lev. 19:33, 34). The stranger also shall make atonement with us (Lev. 16:29) or be cut off (Lev. 17:8,9). Strangers shall be enrolled in the nation of Israel, for they were bought for a price by Messiah and salvation is now of the Gentiles. Thus their place is conditional, but cannot be stolen from them. However, they must be part of the nation

and system (Lev. 22:10,11,15,18). Their abominations are prohibited among us, but we are to love them as ourselves (Lev. 18:26; Deut. 10:17-22). If any widow or fatherless child is afflicted in any way, Y^ehovah will hear them (Ex. 22:23).

Usury

One of the categories of those who are specified as being in the congregation of Y^ehovah is the person who does not put his money out to usury, or reward, against the innocent (Ps. 15:5).

Psalms 15:5 who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

It follows then that usury, or lending money at interest is not only prohibited but prevents an individual from entering the Kingdom of God.

Pro. 28:8 Whoever multiplies his wealth by interest and profit gathers it for him who is generous to the poor.

Jeremiah sees usury as a source of cursing.

Jer. 15:10 Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land! I have not lent, nor have I borrowed, yet all of them curse me.

Y^ehovah condemns the sinful city.

Eze. 22:12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and profit and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; but me you have forgotten, declares Y^ehovah (the LORD) GOD.

Y^ehovah speaks of these distinctions also in Ezekiel 18:3-20. The soul that sins, it shall surely die. Usury is mentioned specifically here as disqualifying the person from eternal life (Ezek. 18:8,13). The concept of usury is tied to increase also and so it is forbidden to lend at interest. It disqualifies the elect from the first resurrection as it is theft.

At the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people were forced to mortgage their lands and houses to buy corn in the restoration. Nehemiah made the people who took land and repossessed it return it to its rightful owners, because lending money at interest, and especially in mortgage, is theft and will not be permitted in the Kingdom of God. Usury or lending money at interest is against God's Law and must cease to occur.

Neh. 5:1-13 Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ² For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive." ³ There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." ⁴ And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards." ⁵ Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards." ⁶ I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷ I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a

great assembly against them ⁸ and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say. ⁹ So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?" ¹⁰ Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. ¹¹ Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." ¹² Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. ¹³ I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised Y^ehovah (the LORD). And the people did as they had promised.

The law is clear: money is not to be lent at interest. This usury is not to take any form either of money or of food, or assets in any form.

Exodus 22:25 "If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him.

Deut. 23:19 "You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest. ²⁰ You may charge a foreigner interest, but you may not charge your brother interest, that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

No person can lend at usury to another in the nation. All nations are now open to the Kingdom of God. All people of the nations are our brothers either physical or spiritual Israel through faith.

Judah is not to lend to Ephraim; neither is Ephraim to lend to Manasseh. There will be no system of lending money at interest in the millennial system of God. Lending will be between nations for purposes of trade and assistance.

The comment by Christ in Matthew 25:27 and Luke 19:23 is not to be construed as condoning the taking of interest. The practice of usury and increase by interest is clearly prohibited by Y^ehovah through the law and the prophets. Christ was asking a rhetorical question. The answer was to the one who thought that the owner was a hard man and so he then buried the talent. Christ then said that he was a wicked and slothful servant; he should have put the money to the exchangers and Christ then could have received his own with usury. However, this practice is condemned by God. The comments are allegorical and they relate to the Kingdom of God and have nothing to do with money.

Lending money at interest is usury and God condemns the practice and the people who do it. In regard to money, people may charge a fee for a service and no more. Where it relates to the sum by way of interest (i.e. usury and theft), it is to be repaid under the laws of theft as a breach of the eighth commandment. Under the reign of Messiah every person lending anything and taking money by

way of interest will be brought to judgment and made to repay according to the penalties associated with theft and dishonest gain.

Plants and animals

The cattle are the Lord's but they are able to be used by man. The system that operates is designed to protect against damage. Theft occurs by withholding, as we have seen. This system extends from Y^ehovah to the priesthood and to mankind and all the creation including animals. It is written: You shall not muzzle an ox while he treads the grain: and does God take care of oxen alone? (cf. Deut. 25:4; 1Cor. 9:9; 1Tim. 5:18).

He who fails to provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house, denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1Tim. 5:8). All such neglect is theft.

Theft in relation to the food laws

The food laws are put in place for the health of the individual, maintain the food chain and the care of the environment. Eating unclean food is not only unwise in matters of health but also it is theft from the structure that Y^ehovah has ordained for this system. There is absolutely no doubt about the scientific basis and validity of the food laws. The clean animals eat from a food chain that we are instructed to preserve. The deterioration of the planet is the direct result of our theft from Y^ehovah and his creation by consumption of items we were not permitted to consume.

Responsibilities regarding the creation

There are a series of laws relating to what we may kill and what we may not kill in relation to the environment. The laws regarding what may be killed and what may not, such as those relating to animals and birds and their young, are covered in the 6th commandment. Failure to observe the restrictions regarding nature and its young, the Sabbaths, and the long-term preservation of the environment is theft and has to be paid for by captivity. The land will have its Sabbaths in spite of man. (Lev. 26:34)

Damage to Persons and Property

Negligent actions

Exodus 21:18-19 "When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist and the man does not die but takes to his bed, ¹⁹ then if the man rises again and walks outdoors with his staff, he who struck him shall be clear; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall have him thoroughly healed.

When damages result from two irresponsible individuals and death does not occur, reparation of health and lost time are to be compensated.

Negligent damage of third parties is to be paid for according to damages as determined by the courts (Ex. 21:22). Payment for damages caused by animals or actions by a third party is covered in Exodus 21:28-33. Payment for the negligent loss of life is as determined by the courts, and may result in death.

Malicious damage of persons

Malicious damages go to various categories. They occur to wives (Deut. 22:13); and to women who are not betrothed (Deut. 22:28-29).

Kidnapping is punishable by death (Ex. 21:16).

Violence and theft are to be done to no man by those in authority (Lk. 3:14; cf. Isa. 17:14). Theft from parents is theft and akin to that of a destroyer (Prov. 28:24).

Negligent damage of property

Where damage occurs by negligence the matter must be made good. We should try to go further and make it better than it was. In the same way, if we are compelled to serve, render that service willingly (cf. Mat. 5:41; 27:32; Mk. 15:21).

Malicious damage of property

Deut. 23:24-25 "If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your bag. ²⁵ If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

Persons cannot be restricted from eating the standing grain due to hunger. However no damage must be done and no harvesting is permitted. If damage or harvesting is done it will be treated as theft or damages.

Damage by retention, fellowship, fraud or stealth

Damage by finding or retention of property, or from fellowship, or fraud, or stealth is treated as removal in robbery.

Lev. 6:1-5 Y^ehovah (The LORD) spoke to Moses, saying, ² "If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against Y^ehovah (the LORD) by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor ³ or has found something lost and lied about it, swearing falsely—in any of all the things that people do and sin thereby—⁴ if he has sinned and has realized his guilt and will restore what he took by robbery or what he got by oppression or the deposit that was committed to him or the lost thing that he found ⁵ or anything about which he has sworn falsely, he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it, and give it to him to whom it belongs on the day he realizes his guilt.

The question of removal by fellowship goes to theft by position of trust. The law has a number of aspects that deal with such cases of theft. In all these above cases the property is to be restored, and a fifth part more is to be added to it. This is in addition to the cost of the offering to the priest

Common theft

The first and primary category under the eighth commandment is common theft. As we will see, there are many forms of theft. The first two forms of theft were expressed as commandments in their own right, namely theft of life in the sixth commandment, and theft of family in the seventh commandment. The eighth commandment is merely concerned with lesser forms of the

concept of property, namely real and personal property. The tenth commandment includes *wife* with *real and personal* property which is not to be coveted.

Theft is of two characteristics. Theft for food is a condemnation on both the family and the society. It is nevertheless theft and is paid for in a number of ways, not the least of which is loss of reputation.

Pro. 6:30-31 People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry, ³¹ but if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold; he will give all the goods of his house.
(cf. Prov. 13:11)

God gives wealth and so also no man should be left to starve.

Deut. 8:17-18 Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' ¹⁸ You shall remember Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Rehabilitation is the role of society in dealing with the thief (Eph. 4:28).

There is another category of theft which is stealing by finding. No person is to retain the property of another, even his enemy, as we have seen from the texts (Ex. 23:4-5; Deut. 22:1-4).

There is to be no theft by authority or favoritism.

Eze. 46:18 The prince shall not take any of the inheritance of the people, thrusting them

out of their property. He shall give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people shall be scattered from his property."

Acquisition must be on just terms and not interfere with the jubilee system, or be in respect of persons (cf. also Prov. 28:19).

There is to be no theft by inequality under the law.

Num. 15:13-16 Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to Y^ehovah (the LORD).¹⁴ And if a stranger is sojourning with you, or anyone is living permanently among you, and he wishes to offer a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to Y^ehovah (the LORD), he shall do as you do.¹⁵ For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before Y^ehovah (the LORD).¹⁶ One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."

Likewise there is one law for atonement.

Num. 15:29-31 You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them.³⁰ But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles Y^ehovah (the LORD), and that person shall be cut off from among his people.³¹ Because he has despised the word of Y^ehovah (the LORD) and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him." (cf. Deut. 28:63).

Theft in judgment by respect of persons is forbidden (cf. Prov. 18:5, 11).

Deut. 1:17 You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.' (cf. Deut. 1:11-18).

In the same manner there is to be no respect of persons in inheritance. That also is theft, for the possessions of the fathers belong in the tribe according to the jubilee and not by favor.

Deut. 21:15-17 "If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved,¹⁶ then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn,¹⁷ but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

The rights of the firstborn of Israel and among the Patriarchs could be lost through sin, as we saw for example with Reuben. This activity pointed to the capacity of the elect to forfeit their positions in sin. The rights of the firstborn are centered on the capacity to provide their responsibility in the family.

Unjust weights and measures

The same standards are to be used in the house or business, and it is theft to use wrong weights and measures.

Lev. 19:35-37 "You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or

quantity.³⁶ You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.³⁷ And you shall observe all my statutes and all my rules, and do them: I am Y^ehovah (the LORD)."

We are to give full measure in order to prolong life, as with the fifth commandment, for this also is equated to righteousness and the work of Y^ehovah (cf. Mic. 6:10-11; Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23).

Deut. 25:13-16 "You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small.¹⁴ You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small.¹⁵ A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you.¹⁶ For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God.

The standards of weights and measures are spoken of through the prophet Ezekiel.

Eze. 45:9-12 "Thus says Y^ehovah (the LORD) GOD: Enough, O princes of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people, declares Y^ehovah (the LORD) GOD.¹⁰ "You shall have just balances, a just ephah, and a just bath.¹¹ The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, the bath containing one tenth of a homer, and the ephah one tenth of a homer; the homer shall be the standard measure.¹² The shekel shall be twenty gerahs; twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels shall be your mina.

Most people are not aware that slander and malice are theft and damage to the

person. People think nothing of repeating slander about others and usually because they have chosen some particular side or another. False religion over the ages has been the source of more slander and malice than any other activity. Where people cannot refute the arguments they resort to slander, and where they are able, they murder.

It is contrary to the law of Y^ehovah to withhold wages, or the property of the poor in the form of clothing and bedding. Fraud is likewise forbidden.

Exo 22:26-27 If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down,²⁷ for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

Lev. 19:13 "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

Deut. 24:14-15 "You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns.¹⁵ You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to Y^ehovah (the LORD), and you be guilty of sin.

The payment of day hire is to be made that day. It is against the law to hold the wages for daily hire overnight. Only employment by agreement can be on weekly or monthly basis.

These articles of law are clear and simple statements. They go to the heart of the law in love of neighbor. James, the

brother of Messiah has much to say about them.

Jas. 5:1-6 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

The same theme is found in Paul.

1Tim. 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."
(cf. Rom. 13:7).

Y^ehovah spoke also by Jeremiah:

Jer. 22:13 "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages,

Y^ehovah will act to deal with this misuse of power.

Mal. 3:5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says Y^ehovah (the LORD) of hosts.

Messiah told us of our wages which are all the same, namely salvation. Those who oppress the hireling and withhold wages unjustly will not be in the Kingdom of God (cf. Mat. 20:1-16).

The taking of gifts in a position of judgment perverts the wise and creates injustice (Ex. 23:8; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:18-20). Y^ehovah rewards as justice is done (Ps. 137:8).

All injustice robs the party to which the injustice is done.

Y^ehovah will raise and restore the children of His people.

Joel 3:6-8 You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own border. ⁷Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head. ⁸I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, to a nation far away, for Y^ehovah (the LORD) has spoken."

All matters of judgment must be done in justice, firstly in the faith and secondly in the nation (Mat. 18:7; 1Cor. 6:1-8). Failure to act in justice in the faith is unrighteousness and theft.

We cannot take anything from the poor as a security against our loan that interferes with their well-being, quality of life, or health, or their safety or livelihood.

Deut. 24:6, 10-14 "No one shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for that would be taking a life in pledge....¹⁰"When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you

shall not go into his house to collect his pledge. ¹¹ You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. ¹² And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge. ¹³ You shall restore to him the pledge as the sun sets, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you. And it shall be righteousness for you before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God. ¹⁴ "You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns.

Here we reiterate the prompt payment of the hired servant and the command not to oppress him.

The spirit of the law goes to care of the poor, rather than simply refraining from oppressing them.

The spirit of the law shows how God condemns the people who refrain from trade on the New Moons and Sabbaths, only to make merchandise of their brethren as soon as the New Moon or Sabbath is over. So it is in these end days.

Amos 8:1-8 This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. ² And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then Y^ehovah (the LORD) said to me, "The end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass by them. ³ The songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day," declares the Lord GOD. "So many dead bodies!" "They are thrown everywhere!" "Silence!" ⁴ Hear this, you who trample on the needy and bring the poor of the land to an end, ⁵ saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false

balances, ⁶ that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and sell the chaff of the wheat?" ⁷ Y^ehovah (The LORD) has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. ⁸ Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?" (cf. Neh. 5:1-13)

In this view, the care of the poor is a distinct responsibility under the law.

Luke 6:30-34 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. ³² "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.

If people have a need, one has an obligation to lend and not ask for its return. In the same way, the people who borrow have an obligation to restore and lend also where there is a need.

We are to love our enemies (Luke 6:35); and protect the runaway (Deut. 23:15-16). Those who have not oppressed the poor, or taken usury or increase will live (Ezek. 18:17; cf. Job 24:2-10; Prov. 22:22, 23).

Eph. 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Trespass is to be forgiven. Thus the underlying theme of the law is repentance.

Luke 17:4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

The sins of ignorance are covered in Leviticus chapters 4 and 5. The purpose of the offerings was to form visible repentance and a fine in the matter at hand. Christ paid the penalties for sin and these could not be fully paid for by the blood of animals. In the last days the system will be set up, the sacrifices will be made and the penalties will again be enforced. This in no way limits the activities and sacrifice of Christ, but is by way of a fine and visible repentance only (cf. Num. 15:28). When that is done the sinner shall be forgiven.

For those who love much, much is forgiven: and those who love little, little is forgiven and the son of God has the power to forgive sins (Lk. 7:47-48). For blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Ps. 32:1-2; Rom. 4:7-8; Col. 2:13).

"The prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up and if he has committed sins they shall be forgiven him" (Jas. 5:15). Sickness is thus distinct from sin. Thus all sin is forgiven for the namesake of Y^ehovah in Jesus Christ (1Jn. 2:12).

Thus he who withholds forgiveness on repentance commits theft, and inhibits

the restoration, and steals from the life of the repentant individual and those around him.

The Lord's Prayer is in part: "Father forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Forgiveness is conditional and a failure to forgive is both murder and theft, in breach of the sixth and the eighth commandments. It precludes the self-righteous from entering the Kingdom of God. With the self righteous the theft is of quality of life of those around them, and condition of forgiveness of the truly repentant. Through their ignorance they do not enter the Kingdom of God themselves and prevent others who might otherwise have entered in from doing so.

Theft of a man's wife involves a series of penalties. Abimelech was to be punished even though he had not slept with Sarah, but had merely taken her, because Abraham said she was his sister. Although this statement was true it withheld other vital truth, and it nevertheless placed Abimelech in a position where both he and his nation could have been destroyed (cf. Gen. 20:3-7). The seventh commandment was thus in force at this time also and understood by the Gentiles. In spite of Abraham's sins he was a prophet and Yehovah heard his prayers to Him. Yehovah had chosen him and set him apart and would deal with him in spite of those sins. Abraham was thus not justified by his own actions, but by the Grace of Yah alone (cf. Gen. 20:3-7, 14-18).

We have seen that any stealing by finding or unlawful retention, or removal and withholding by dishonesty is to be restored with a fifth of the value added to the item, and the cost of an offering to God through the priesthood added as well. Where something is removed and killed, or sold or disposed of in such manner then the value of the items is paid at a much higher rate of penalty. In the case of cattle he shall restore five for one; or the case of sheep he shall restore four for one. If it is found in his hand and still alive, he restores double. If he is caught breaking into property under the cover of darkness, he can be killed without penalty of homicide. If he is killed after sunrise, then the killer is to pay the penalty.

The thief is to make full restitution, or be sold into bondage for his theft. Negligence in damages through fire is also considered theft, requiring full restitution. Loss by withholding of another's property while in safekeeping requires double repayment.

Exodus 22:1-31 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. ² If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him, ³ but if the sun has risen on him, there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. ⁴ If the stolen beast is found alive in his possession, whether it is an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double. ⁵ "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed over, or lets his beast loose and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best in his own field and in his own vineyard. ⁶ "If fire breaks out and catches in

thorns so that the stacked grain or the standing grain or the field is consumed, he who started the fire shall make full restitution. ⁷ "If a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe, and it is stolen from the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. ⁸ If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property. ⁹ For every breach of trust, whether it is for an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep, for a cloak, or for any kind of lost thing, of which one says, 'This is it,' the case of both parties shall come before God. The one whom God condemns shall pay double to his neighbor. ¹⁰ "If a man gives to his neighbor a donkey or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep safe, and it dies or is injured or is driven away, without anyone seeing it, ¹¹ an oath by Y^ehovah (the LORD) shall be between them both to see whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property. The owner shall accept the oath, and he shall not make restitution. ¹² But if it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its owner. ¹³ If it is torn by beasts, let him bring it as evidence. He shall not make restitution for what has been torn. ¹⁴ "If a man borrows anything of his neighbor, and it is injured or dies, the owner not being with it, he shall make full restitution. ¹⁵ If the owner was with it, he shall not make restitution; if it was hired, it came for its hiring fee. ¹⁶ "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. ¹⁷ If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins. ¹⁸ "You shall not permit a sorceress to live. ¹⁹ "Whoever lies with an animal shall be put to death. ²⁰ "Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than Y^ehovah (the LORD) alone, shall be devoted to destruction. ²¹ "You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. ²² You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. ²³ If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, ²⁴ and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your

children fatherless. ²⁵ "If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him. ²⁶ If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, ²⁷ for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate. ²⁸ "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. ²⁹ "You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. ³⁰ You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me. ³¹ "You shall be consecrated to me. Therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

The law regarding restoration of things killed while in our charge or borrowed goes to the question of restoration due to negligent acts. Thus the requirement to take due care of property delivered to one's charge has another branch of the law. In modern terms, the person in charge of the item is responsible for its death or damage, and must make good the loss to the person in original and true ownership. However, if he was in charge and it was damaged by wild beasts, he must prove the fact, and then will be absolved of responsibility as it could have happened no matter who was in charge.

The entire concept of the tithes and redemption is such that all that is dedicated to the Lord of clean animals cannot be redeemed, as it points towards the elect as the first fruits in the harvest. Redeeming the tithes is withholding, and is to incur the twenty per cent or one

fifth penalty that is mandatory in withholding another's property. For the tithe is God's property.

Procedures and judicial order

All commandments carry the capacity to place in ward or detention pending judicial order (cf. Lev. 24:12; Num. 15:34; 1Kgs 22:27). No decision can be delayed unreasonably; justice must be swift.

There are to be levels of judges, so that all matters may be dealt with swiftly and at the appropriate level (Ex. 18:12-24). No man is to do to another that which he would not have men do to him (Mat. 7:12). Each man's reward shall return upon his own head (Obadiah 15).

The Sabbath Year is a year of release and must be taken into account in all judicial orders, in contracts and in damages. All damages and prices must relate to the jubilee and the Sabbaths, and no awards can be made which run counter to the jubilee.

Restoration by release

We are to restore all men at the Year of Release. We are not to make men slaves physically or financially by being in our servitude or in our debt (cf. Deut. 15:1-18 above).

In all the inheritance that the Lord has given us, the workers of the church or the appointed priesthood labor for us, and thus must be kept or sustained from out of the tithes and offerings of the faith. We are not to steal from those whom God has set apart to do His work.

Deut. 18:1-8 "The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat Y^ehovah's (the LORD's) food offerings as their inheritance. ² They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; Y^ehovah (the LORD) is their inheritance, as he promised them. ³ And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. ⁴ The firstfruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. ⁵ For Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of Y^ehovah (the LORD), him and his sons for all time. ⁶ "And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he lives—and he may come when he desires—to the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) will choose, ⁷ and ministers in the name of Y^ehovah (the LORD) his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand to minister there before Y^ehovah (the LORD), ⁸ then he may have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony.

The Levites were set apart and now the priesthood of Melchizedek is also set apart (cf. Heb. 7:1-8:13).

The priesthood is set aside for God, as the entire elect are God's chosen priesthood.

Num. 8:13-19 And you shall set the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to Y^ehovah (the LORD). ¹⁴ "Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. ¹⁵ And after that the Levites shall go in to serve at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering. ¹⁶ For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel,

I have taken them for myself. ¹⁷ For all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself, ¹⁸ and I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel. ¹⁹ And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel when the people of Israel come near the sanctuary."

The Levites pointed towards the church and they symbolized the entire nation of Israel as God's firstborn. So now the church symbolizes the firstborn of the nations and the salvation of the world.

Num. 18:15-18 Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to Y^ehovah (the LORD), shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. ¹⁶ And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. ¹⁷ But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to Y^ehovah (the LORD). ¹⁸ But their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right thigh are yours.

In all the laws of the offerings, we are to use that which is set aside for the Lord in the right manner, and we are not to misuse it before it is given to God. Withholding of the firstborn is theft, and so the elect who are all to become kings and priests cannot be withheld from God.

Thus the blemished animals can be eaten, but only the unblemished can be set aside for God. This represents the fact that the elect have their robes made white in the blood of the lamb and are set aside to work for God under His Christ (cf. Deut. 15:19-23 above).

Deut. 26:1-19 "When you come into the land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. ³ And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare today to Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God that I have come into the land that Y^ehovah (the LORD) swore to our fathers to give us.' ⁴ Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God. ⁵ "And you shall make response before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, 'A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶ And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷ Then we cried to Y^ehovah (the LORD), the God of our fathers, and Y^ehovah (the LORD) heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ And Y^ehovah (the LORD) brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹ And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Y^ehovah (LORD), have given me.' And you shall set it down before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God and worship before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God. ¹¹ And you shall rejoice in

all the good that Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you. ¹² "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your towns and be filled, ¹³ then you shall say before Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover, I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all your commandment that you have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. ¹⁴ I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the voice of Y^ehovah (the LORD) my God. I have done according to all that you have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.' ¹⁶ "This day Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have declared today that Y^ehovah (the LORD) is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice. ¹⁸ And Y^ehovah (the LORD) has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, ¹⁹ and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to Y^ehovah (the LORD) your God, as he promised."

Thus the Tithes and the Feasts are therefore mandatory and look forward to the restoration. Failure to keep the feasts and provide the tithes is theft, and precludes the individual from the first

resurrection. Tithes and offerings also may not be used for the dead as was common in the funerary practice of the pagans in ancient days.

Compliance and freedom

Each of our people was bought with a price, thus we cannot become the slaves or servants of men (1Cor. 7:23). We are neither to be servants nor to make other people servants. We are commanded not to steal. Taking the liberty and birthright of others is simple theft, and precludes the thief from the Kingdom of God. Stand fast in the liberty which made us free and by obedience preserves our own freedom, and the freedom of others (Gal. 5:1).

Failure to comply with any judicial order relating to the commandments is potentially punishable by death. Each person is to ensure that all the law is maintained. The eighth commandment is no exception. Failure to deal with the property of another is negligence in the letter and spirit of the law.

Deut. 22:1-4 "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray and ignore them. You shall take them back to your brother. ² And if he does not live near you and you do not know who he is, you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall stay with you until your brother seeks it. Then you shall restore it to him. ³ And you shall do the same with his donkey or with his garment, or with any lost thing of your brother's, which he loses and you find; you may not ignore it. ⁴ You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore them. You shall help him to lift them up again.

Likewise, the obligation exists to reveal a breach of the law (Deut. 22:24). Failure

to disclose is consent to the offence and even to have pleasure in those that do them (Ps. 50:18; Rom. 1:32; 1Tim. 5:22). If any seek to make profit by false witness, then the same shall be done to them as would have been done to the person accused (Deut. 19:18-19). We must not withhold witness in a matter (Prov. 24:10-12)

No man is to do violence to another by breach of any commandment (Prov. 28:17; cf. Lk. 10:29-30). To conceal one's own theft by dishonestly, and thus implicate another by fraud or entrapment, is the most malicious form of theft.

Christ said that the Pharisees tithed mint and cumin, but passed over judgment and the love of God. They had to do both of these things (Lk. 11:42).

Property laws and the eighth commandment are in place to protect the individual in society, and to protect the society from the individual. Property is not an end in itself; it is merely the means by which we ensure the well being of each other.

To get is not God's way. To make and create, so that each individual is enriched by our presence on the planet is the thrust of the law and the prophets.

Summary of crime and punishment

Deut. 24:7 "If a man is found stealing one of his brothers of the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

In this text, kidnapping is punishable by death; however, there is a larger concept in this text which carries on to the concept of making merchandise of each other. Hence, organizations that seek to make conscription and selling of other people part of the merchandise network are in breach of God's Law, and the individuals involved must repent. No person can steal the quality of life of another and inherit the Kingdom of God.

The law of property is simply a physical aspect of a higher spiritual law. Stealing from man is simply stealing from God in another form. If we cannot be trusted in upholding physical things, how can we be trusted in spiritual matters? We must repent and learn to love one another, upholding the welfare of each other in freedom and purity.

Amen, Y^ehovah