

# Entering the Cloud (Our Approach to God part 2)

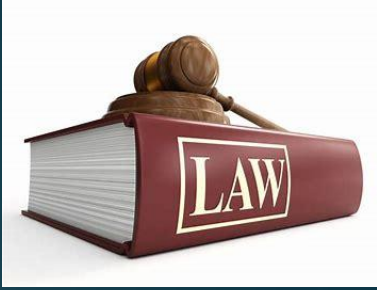
EXODUS 21-24

# Eye for an Eye?



- ▶ There are many laws concerning the daily life of Israel in the next 3 chapters (please read yourself)
- ▶ Regarding **civil justices**, we can make 3 observations here:
- ▶ First, the **punishment** should NOT exceed the **crime** (Exod. 21:23-25) (note: not a spiritual statement)
- ▶ Second, **compensation** should be given and it should be fair (i.e. 22:1)
- ▶ Third, **intention** and **responsibility** are important

# Following the Law



- ▶ Beyond the need for civil justices, God did not just lay down the law for the sake of **harmony**, but also so that the people may **learn** about the character of God and **draw near** to Him
- ▶ Instead of taking the opportunity to **learn** about God, their focus was on **obeying** God to keep God at arm's length (19:8). Why is that?
- ▶ Note: the law should be obeyed as they follow God, (Deut. 4:1-6). The point here is their **emphasis**.

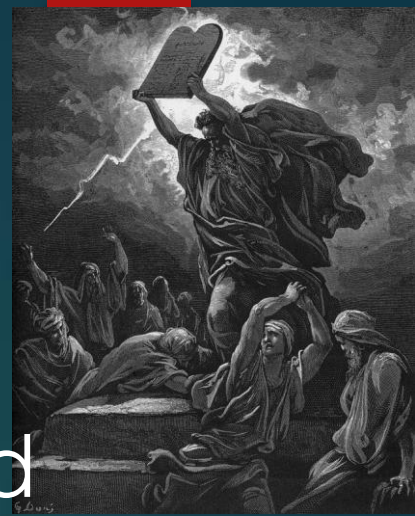
# The 3 Groups of People



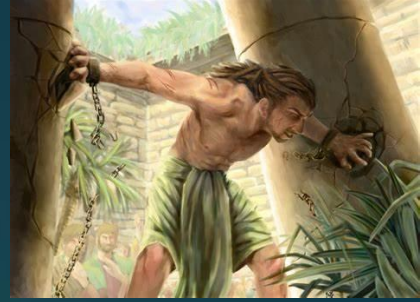
- ▶ Let's examine the 3 groups of people before answering:
- ▶ First, we have the **congregation** that was content in verbally committing to God in obeying the law, but had little to no desire to draw near to God (20:19)
- ▶ Second, we have the **elders** that “**beheld** God, and ate and drink” (24:11)
- ▶ Third, we have **Moses** and Joshua who went to the top of the mountain and “**entered** the cloud”

# 1. The Congregation

- ▶ No doubt their **sin** and the **fear of God** played a part in them keeping their distance from God
- ▶ Nevertheless, why are “dos and don’ts” more **favourable** than a deeper relationship with God?
- ▶ Some people were **genuine** yet failed to obey God, many more were simply giving God and Moses the **formality** of obedience.
- ▶ In either case they did not end up obeying God or drawing near to Him...



# Why Dos and Don'ts More Favorable



- ▶ We are in **charge**: I do this or I don't do that the way I like it, so long as I keep the rules (e.g. Samson) Judges 21:25 (with interpretations)
- ▶ We are in **control**: we can dial up the blessings from God (e.g. Pharisee, Matt. 23)
- ▶ We can **hide our old self** with outward rules (Matt. 23:27-28). It is not just about keeping God at arm's length, but also toward others

## 2. To Eat and Drink

- ▶ There is nothing wrong with eating or drinking itself (i.e. fellowship time)
- ▶ (2 Peter 1:5-8) They **believed** God and **beheld** the beauty of God, yet they did not know more about God because of it.
- ▶ The problem was with their **priority** (i.e. seek first, Matt. 6:23) How is your priority? Do you deep down believe that you must have God?





### 3. Went into the Cloud

- ▶ What does “entering” mean for Moses and us?
  1. We must enter into the **knowledge** of God—meaning we acknowledge God’s **attributes** in our daily lives (Psalm 36:5-9)
  2. We must enter into the **glory** of God—meaning we acknowledge God’s **works** in our daily lives
  3. We must enter into the **presence** of God—meaning we acknowledge God’s presence in our daily lives (Psalm 23:4)



# Conclusion

- ▶ Please don't get confused about civil justice and **moral decision** (Matt. 5:38-48)
- ▶ Do you rather choose to follow a set of rules than to have a deeper **relationship** with God? (Gal. 5:22-23) Why is that?
- ▶ (Prov. 2:1-6) Are you willing to pay the **price**?
- ▶ Are you willing to enter the **presence** of God today, to behold His beauty, and to see His work in your daily life? (Psalm 27)

