

# The Scrolls

Helping CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N34

August 21, 2022

#### TEN WORDS

"8/If It Doesn't Have Your Name on It" Exodus 20:15; 22:1-15

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Generosity

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:7





How are violations of the eighth commandment to be handled?

Stealing is wrong. It doesn't matter whether the victim is injured or unharmed in the process. It doesn't matter whether the victim is rich or poor. And while the value of what is stolen may matter when it comes to making restitution or to criminal sentencing, stealing is stealing. Taking for oneself what belongs to another without their consent is wrong. Stealing is not a victimless crime. Not only is *theft* wrong, but so is *robbery*, which involves violence or the threat of violence, and so is *fraud*, which involves deceit or the use of trickery. Examples of all three are ubiquitous nowadays.

Identity *theft* is in the news daily. For example, "Paige Thompson, 36, a former Amazon software engineer who used the online handle 'erratic,' obtained the personal information of more than 100 million people – a data breach that prompted Capital One to reach a tentative \$190 million settlement with affected customers. The Treasury Department also fined the company \$80 million for failing to protect the data" (apnews.com/article/ paige-thompson-seattle-identity-theft-01032e26b4084f213eb5eec5876b876c). Everyone who uses a smart phone or computer to access the internet in order to make purchases, pay bills, or transfer money from one bank account to another is vulnerable – which means everyone is vulnerable. What's more, theft in general is commonplace. The following statistic makes locking one's car good advice. There were 810,400 vehicles stolen in 2020, totaling about \$7.4 billion in total motor vehicle thefts. Vehicle theft is up 11.8% since 2019, when 724,872 vehicles were stolen.

In the news, too, is *robbery* of all kinds—the target of which is often 7-Eleven stores. For example, police authorities in southern California are currently on the lookout for a suspect in a string of robberies and fatal shootings in Ontario. So many reports of this violent crime make citing any single example seem humdrum. So consider the following statistic: There were 33,296 robberies with a handgun in the United States in 2020. A further 8,641 robberies were perpetrated with a knife or

other cutting instrument in that year, adding up to nearly 42,000 violent crimes related to stealing. Texans will be interested to know that the robbery rate in their state is 98 robberies per 100,000 people, slightly higher than the national average.

Finally, from contractors who take the money and run to sophisticated scams targeting seniors, elder fraud is a growing problem. Consumer Affairs lists seven different types of scams that target seniors, one of which is the *government imposter* scam. For example, Social Security imposters tell victims that their Social Security number has been linked to criminal activity or suspended. The scammer then claims they can reactivate that number once the victim confirms what it is. Other Social Security scams may tell victims their benefits are eligible for an increase and request that they confirm their name, date of birth and SSN. Both of these approaches are ploys to gain access to personal information that can be used to access private accounts and personal finances. Another example of a prominent government scam is Internal Revenue Service impersonation. This scam usually involves calling victims directly and telling them they owe taxes that, if not paid, could lead to their arrest or other legal action. The scammer's goal is to intimidate victims into immediately sending the requested money or providing personal information, like bank account or Social Security numbers (see consumeraffairs.com/finance/ elderly-financial-scam-statistics.html).

The Eighth Commandment is being violated left and right all around us, but what has "You shall not steal" got to do with generosity? Paul makes the connection in Ephesians 4:28, suggesting that giving generously to others is the antithesis of and the righteous alternative to stealing. He writes, "Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need."

# 1

#### **EXAMINE GOD'S WORD**

#### Read Exodus 20:15 and 22:1-15

15 "You shall not steal."

#### 22:1-15

- 1 "Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.
- 2 "If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; 3 but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed.
- "Anyone who steals must certainly make restitution, but if they have nothing, they must be sold to pay for their theft. 4 If the stolen animal is found alive in their possession whether ox or donkey or sheep they must pay back double.
- 5 "If anyone grazes their livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in someone else's field, the offender must make restitution from the best of their own field or vineyard.
- 6 "If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.
- 7 "If anyone gives a neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if caught, must pay back double. 8 But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges, and they must determine whether the owner of the house has laid hands on the other person's property. 9 In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their cases before the judges. The one whom the judges declare guilty must pay back double to the other.
- 10 "If anyone gives a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to their neighbor for safekeeping and it dies or is injured or is taken away while no one is looking, 11 the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the LORD that the neighbor did not lay hands on the other person's property. The owner is to accept this, and no restitution is required. 12 But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, restitution must be made to the owner. 13 If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, the neighbor shall bring in the remains as evidence and shall not be required to pay for the torn animal.
- 14 "If anyone borrows an animal from their neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, they must make restitution. 15 But if the owner is with the animal, the borrower will not have to pay. If the animal was hired, the money paid for the hire covers the loss.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "steal" in 20:15.
- Underline "if" in 22:1-15.
- Bracket "slaughters it or sells it" in v. 1.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 3.
- Circle "be sold" in v. 3.
- Bracket "from the best" in v. 5.
- Box "so that" indicating result in v. 6.
- Circle "shocks" in v. 6.
- Circle "judges" in vv. 8, 9.
- Circle "oath" in v. 11.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_\_."

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Define "steal."
2. With regard to nonviolent property crime, which penalty makes more sense to you, <i>restitution</i> or <i>incarceration</i> ? Explain.
3. <i>Describe</i> the limit placed on the use of lethal force by the defenders of property and <i>explain</i> the rationale behind it (vv. 2-3).
4. Explain the <i>contrast</i> in verse 3b.
5. When it comes to property loss, negligence is no excuse (vv. 5-6) — quite the opposite. How so?
6. If <i>valuables</i> left for safekeeping by one party with another party turn up missing (v. 7) and no thief is found, <i>what</i> are the parties to do and <i>why</i> ?
7. If property claimed lost by one party is found in the possession of another party, how is their ownership dispute to be resolved?
8. An <i>animal</i> left for safekeeping with another dies, is injured, or turns up missing. How is <i>responsibility</i> for the damage or loss determined?
9. Why is the <i>presence</i> of the owner relevant in the case of injury or death to a <i>borrowed</i> animal?

10. Discussion: Each of the cases cited in Exodus 22:1-15 involves the application of the eighth commandment. Talk

about some fundamental principles of jurisprudence that you see illustrated by these cases.

## **EXPLORE RESOURCES**

#### **Commentary On The Text**

Exodus 20:15 contains the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal," which generally speaking, means that "to take another person's property without permission or legal right without intending to return it" is forbidden. The Ten Commandments are examples of apodictic law, which can only be applied to particular situations with the help of casuistic or case law. One writer explains: "Apodictic law encompasses absolute general commands rendered from 'on high' as 'thou shall not's' and as such has little application in the courts. The Ten Commandments are a prime example of apodictic law. Casuistic law (or case law) is based on precedents and is usually in the form of 'if/then' conditional statements. Moral principles are applied to determine right and wrong in particular situations. Casuistic law is necessary because it is not possible to apply general commands directly to actual moral situations" (Paul A. Tambrino, "Apodictic Law and Casuistic Law," (timesrepublican.com/opinion/ columnists/2017/08/apodictic-law-and-casuistic-law). Exodus 22:1-15 contains case law related to the eight commandment.

This passage gives examples of three different types of property loss — all extrapolated from the eighth commandment. The three types include: 1) the loss of property due to theft (vv. 1-4); 2) the loss of property due to negligence (vv. 5-6); and 3) the loss of property entrusted to another (vv. 7-15). In each case, *restitution* rather than *incarceration* is the penalty imposed on the guilty party. One writer comments: "The laws in this section (22:1-17) of the Covenant Code reflect that God envisioned no jail or prison system for punishing crimes in Israel. Confinement in a penal institution is the primary way modern Western societies punish such crimes as theft or sexual exploitation, but Israel's law did not include confinement penalties at all" (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, NAC, 500).

With regard to simple theft, according to verse 1, whoever steals and then *disposes* of the stolen property – revealing their act to be intentional – must make restitution amounting to a multiple of the value of the stolen property (i.e., "five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for a sheep"). If something other than an animal is stolen the parties involved would be able to determine by extrapolation the restitution to be paid. According to verse 4, if the stolen property is recovered, it must be returned twofold (i.e., "they must pay back double") to discourage repeat offending. Inserted between, verses 2-3 address the use of lethal force. In a nutshell, used at night, it is acceptable; used in the day, it is not. The rationale behind this day-night difference appears related to the homeowner ability to recognize the intruder's intention. In the dark of night the intruder would likely be

viewed as a threat to one's life, making the use of deadly force an act of self-defense. Whereas during the light of day the intruder would likely be recognized as a burglar without malicious intent. The same writer observes: "The law did not allow unlimited freedom to the victim of a crime to defend or retaliate. Even a criminal caught in the act of a serious crime had protections; conversely, even the victim of a serious crime could be prosecuted for murder if he resisted more violently than could be justified (thus the specific mention of being 'guilty of bloodshed,' v. 3a)" (Stuart, 503).

According to verses 5-6, the loss of property due to *negligence* amounts to stealing. If a farmer carelessly allows his livestock to stray and graze in someone else's field, he must make *quantitatively* and *qualitatively* appropriate restitution, namely, "from the best of their own field or vineyard" (v. 5b). Likewise, if a farmer starts a fire that spreads out of control fueled by thorn-bushes, resulting in the destruction of the grain in another farmer's field, the one who started the fire must make similarly appropriate restitution.

Verses 7-15 describe how disputes over the loss of property entrusted to another are to be resolved – especially when the ownership of property is disputed. A number of scenarios are put forward. If valuables are stolen and the thief is caught, he must pay back double (cf., v. 4). But if no suspect is seized, how can the owner of the missing property know whether his goods were stolen from the custodian or by the custodian? In that case, the custodian must appear before the judges to convince them that he has "not laid hands on the other person's property" (v. 8) – in which case no restitution is required. In all cases of disputed ownership, both parties must appear before the judges, who will render a judgment. The party deemed a thief must pay back double to the owner (cf., vv. 4, 7). But if the property is proven to be stolen, the custodian must make restitution to the owner. In related cases involving the death, damage, or disappearance of another's property, the custodian must swear before the LORD (cf., 20:7) that he "did not lay hands on the other person's property" (v. 11). The owner is not to question this, so no restitution is required. The matter is left in the LORD's hands. And if an animal is torn to pieces and the custodian can produce its remains, no restitution is required. Finally, custodians are responsible for the injury and death of a borrowed animal only if the owner is not present (v. 14). If present, the owner is deemed responsible. And in the case of a rented animal, the money paid for hire covers any loss (v. 15).

Israel's case law is not to be applied directly to contemporary situations; nevertheless, it illustrates basic principles of jurisprudence extrapolated from the eighth commandment that remain relevant for today.

#### Word Studies/Notes

The Ten Commandments 20:15 steal are an examples of apodictic law, namely, laws stated in absolute "you shall" and "you shall not" terms. Exodus 21-22 contains examples of casuistic law, namely, case law stated in conditional terms (i.e., "if" terms). Exodus 21:1-15 contains case law involving the application of the Eighth Commandment to real life situations. "The laws in 21:1-23:12 are to be understood merely as a representative selection of the whole Mosaic Law. It is not an attempt at a complete listing of all the laws. The purpose of the selection was to provide a basis for teaching the nature of divine justice. By studying specific cases of the application of God's will in concrete situations, the reader of the Pentateuch could learn the basic principles undergirding the covenant relationship. Whereas the 'ten words' provided a general statement of the basic principles of justice which God demanded of his people, the examples selected here further demonstrated how those principles, or ideals, were to be applied to real live situations" (John H. Sailhamer, The Pentateuch as Narrative, 290). "Since stealing of any kind and under any circumstances was wrong, it is clear that God approved of private ownership of goods in Israel" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Exodus," 2022 ed., 197, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/exodus. pdf).

22:1 *slaughters or sells* "... (a judge could extrapolate from this law to any situation where something valuable had been stolen and would not think of the law as being useful to him only in cases involving stolen animals). The situation described is that of intentional theft, the intent being established unmistakably by what the thief did with the animal after it was in his possession, that is, he ate it or sold it (which would prove intent)" (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, NAC, 502).

v. 2 but "Killing an intruder in broad daylight is not justifiable" (The NIV Study Bible, note on Ex 22:3), because burglary does carry a death sentence. But killing an intruder at night is justifiable because the intent of the intruder cannot be determined in the dark, so the killing is deemed an act of selfdefense. Regarding the law, one commentator writes: "In order to protect the householder's life, it declares that he does not commit a capital offence if he kills the thief that is found breaking in at night; and in order to protect the thief's life, it prescribes that if the owner kill him in the day-time, he shall be regarded as a murderer" (U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Exodus, 283). "The property owner could still defend against theft in the daytime but could not use lethal force in the process" (Stuart, 503).

v. 5 *from the best* "Restitution should always err on the side of quality and generosity" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Ex 22:5). "A farmer knew that if he were neglectful in the manner described in this law, he would lose not merely a certain amount of grain or fruit (or even whole fruit trees) but the very best of that grain or fruit—the quality factor serving as a serious deterrent in addition to the quantity factor" (Stuart, 505).

v. 6 so that Cf., "If a fire breaks out and spreads to thornbushes, so that stacked grain or standing grain or the whole field is consumed, the one who started the fire must surely make restitution" (NET). Thornbushes, which were often used as hedges bordering cultivated fields to keep livestock out, burned easily and spread fires quickly. The one responsible for the fire had to make restitution for the grain lost—what had already been harvested (i.e., "shocks of grain"), was still standing in the field (i.e., standing grain"), or both (i.e., "the whole field").

vv. 8-9 judges Heb. 'elōhîm pl.; cf. "If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must be brought to *Elohim* to find out whether or not he took his neighbor's valuables" (NOG). The term is most frequently translated "God" with reference to the one true God (cf. Dt 6:4-5), "gods" with reference to idols (cf. Dt 4:28; 6:14; 32:17), and "judges" with reference to human arbitrators of justice - "the judges were God's representatives in court cases (see 21;6; 22:8-9, 28 and IV text notes)" (The NIV Study Bible, note on Ex 22:11). Contrary to most English translations, one commentator argues the term should be rendered "God." "What the law calls for is a decision by God ('the owner of the house must appear before God,' v. 8; 'both parties are to bring their cases before God.' v. 9)" (Stuart, 506-507; cf. Cassuto, 286 -87).

v. 11 *oath*Cf., the third commandment, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God" (20:3). "To avoid the inference that he was actually guilty of having disposed of the animal for his own profit or pleasure, the neighbor took an oath before God . . . Could the oath taker have been lying? Of course, But then he would have incurred God's enmity, a far worse matter than having incurred his neighbor's. If, however, the one who 'lost' the animal could not or would not swear by formal oath in the presence of Yahweh (at the tabernacle or, later, temple) that he was innocent, he would be responsible to make the usual restitution" (Stuart, 507).

#### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Violations of the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal," entailing both deliberate and negligent actions, resulting in the loss of or damage to another person's property, require restitution be made.

#### **CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE**

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



#### **3 LIVING QUESTIONS**

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



#### **FAMILY TALK**

When my kids were young, we went on an adventure to find Halloween costumes. After securing the costumes, we got settled in the car and started heading home. My sweet oldest boy proudly showed me an Airhead candy and announced, "I knew you wouldn't let me have it, so I just took it." The look on his face was begging for a compliment for his ingenuity. Sadly, for him, I launched into a lecture (tirade) of epic proportions about stealing and going to jail. One mile and many tears later, he returned the Airhead with an apology to the store manager. He never did that again. Thinking about this always makes me laugh, but today as I reflect, I'm struck with the notion that I, too, was a thief in this situation. I robbed my child of an available parent. If he knew I would say no and didn't bother asking, how many times had I jumped straight to shutting him down? I robbed my child of joy. Rather than responding with grace, I overreacted, yelled and absolutely scared the thief out of him. Can you imagine being on the receiving end of that lecture? I also robbed my child of an opportunity to run to the Lord. Rather than going about this teachable moment calmly and with grace, pointing to God, I pretty much put him in prison and started imagining his prison tats. Though the end result would be the same, I would handle the situation much differently today. What are you stealing from your kids today? What's your plan to be a life-giver instead of life-taker? We are praying for you!

#### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 20:15; 22:1-15

- 1. What is the eighth commandment?
- 2. What happens to the person who steals?
- 3. What is restitution?

#### What Do You Think?

Is there anything good that comes from stealing?

#### What Do You Do?

The opposite of taking is giving. Practice generosity today by cleaning out your closet, collecting canned food, and the like for others.

#### **CORE COMPETENCY:** Generosity

I give away my faith, life, money and time to help with God's work.

#### **MEMORY VERSE:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by comp CENTRALKids Bible Study or and another token by memoriz reciting the memory verse for	I memorized of the string and I brought a friction of this page I brought a friction of this week.	ny Bible Study his week's verse Bible to church end	CENTRAL CENTRA	
Questions: kids@wearecentral	CHILD'S NAME	GRADE	PARENT SIGNATURE	_,

#### **OUR CORE COMPETENCIES**

#### **CENTRAL BELIEFS**

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.* 

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



#### **CENTRAL VIRTUES**

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15) *I choose to do the right things in my relation-ships with others* 

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



#### **CENTRAL PRACTICES**

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gosnel.

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Arlington, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2022 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick.

All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



8001 Anderson Boulevard Fort Worth, Texas 76120 817-274-1315 wearecentral.org