

JUSTICE AND THE LAW AND THE COURTS

By Raymond White

The Bible begins with the Torah which was and is a revealed codified legal system. It was, in fact, the constitution of a new nation; namely, Israel.

Why would God's first revelation be a legal system rather than a promise of heaven? That itself tells us something about God and his will for us. Clearly, God wants us to get along and tries to achieve that by whatever means that might work.

But from the creation on, people have mistreated each other. And so God created law and made Moses his law-giver.

Since God's judicial system, Torah, is so much at the forefront of God's thinking, it deserves more of our attention than we commonly give it. We should try a bit harder to understand it, and maybe we you use it to evaluate our own legal system to see how our laws measure up. So, let's begin.

[1] TORAH

The Torah begins with creation and God's high hopes for man. But things quickly turn ugly. Mankind falls, then there is a murder, then worldwide violence which causes God to regret the whole thing, and finally a worldwide flood to eliminate the violence.

Things at that point are looking pretty bleak. But then there is a new hope and a new beginning for mankind. But with that new beginning comes a new and violent commandment —

Genesis 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

God had wished better things for humanity, where everybody got along because they simply cared for each other. But that was not to be. So to make things work better this time, God instituted law. First, this terse directive to Noah, then later, a complete codified legal system to Moses which we call the Mosaic Law.

Right at the beginning there are two most critical points —

First:

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

This 9th commandment is key to making the law, any law, work. Truth in court is the fundamental requirement. Courts have no hope of administering justice if they can't get at the truth first. Perjury must necessarily be the first prohibition in any legal system.

Second:

Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

The Mosaic law, in God's mind, was so complete, so done, so correct that it ought never to be tampered with. There was no congress to create new law, they already had law. And judges were to judge only and not to legislate from the bench which today's judges are in the habit of doing.

So, on those two foundation idea, we can now proceed to everything else that the law says.

***Deuteronomy 16:18** Judges and officers shalt thou make thee ... and they shall judge the people with just judgment. :19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doeth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.*

“Don't wrest judgment” means don't twist the law to make it say something different than what it actually says. In modern language, don't legislate from the bench. This is God's demand for (in modern language) “strict constructionists,” judges who are content to apply the law and not create law. Activists judges are strictly forbidden. In other words, stay true to the precise wording of the Constitution.

“Don't respect persons” means equal protection; that is, apply the law equally to all. Don't be influenced by wealth or station. It's tempting to acquit a defendant just because he is a black football hero. O.J. Simpson was acquitted of two murders simply because we love heroes. Such preferences violate God's demand for justice at the core.

“Don't take gifts” means don't accept bribes, don't sell judicial favors. But more than that it means don't accept gifts or favors of any kind from anyone because they make judges evaluate testimonies subtly different without even realizing it.

***Deuteronomy 16:20** That which is altogether just shalt thou follow.*

A judge once said, “This is not a court of justice, sir, this is a court of law.” He and the entire legal system seem to have missed the whole point of what law is about. The point of law is not to create a bunch of rules but to create justice. There is a letter and a spirit, and both matter.

There is a subtle difference between legal and lawful. Legal speaks to the letter of the law, and lawful to the spirit. In Nazi Germany, it was legal to murder Jews, but it was never lawful. Passing laws may make murder legal, but such laws can never make murder lawful. Legislation does not make an immoral law lawful. In American law, murdering unborn babies is legal, but all the legislation that Congress can ever dream up will never make abortion lawful.

***Deuteronomy 17:7** At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

The common sense-ness of this is obvious. Anybody can fabricate a lie against anybody. But is the accusation true? Remember the 9th commandment, *thou shalt not bare false witness*. So how is the judge to know the difference between a valid accusation

and a lie? If you have two witnesses, you can interrogate them in two different rooms. If their testimonies agree, they are telling the truth. If their testimonies contradict, they are lying.

The classic example of this is the apocryphal story of “Susanne and the Elders” which appears in the Catholic Bible. You should read it. It makes the point very well.

But even two witnesses is not fail safe. The court is to use every means possible to ascertain the validity of the witnesses, however many there are. Modern forensic technology goes a long way to helping courts get it right.

[2] JOSHUA

Eventually Moses died, and it fell to Joshua to actually create the nation that Moses dreamed of and to implement its laws.

One of the things that Joshua set up was a system that today we might call Habeas Corpus, which is Latin for “you have the body” and refers to a writ requiring that a person who is detained be brought before a judge. Habeas Corpus safeguards against unfair imprisonment. It is the essential fairness of American and British law. Basically, this guarantees that the accused will have their day in court.

Israel had a similar thing, a sort of self imposed protective custody arrangement called cities of refuge. Under Torah law, if you killed someone, whether by accident or self-defense or actual murder, the victim’s family had a right to appoint an “avenger of blood” whose job it was to kill you. What you had a right to do was flee.

Joshua 20:2 Appoint out for you cities of refuge :3 that the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood :4 And when he doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, that he may dwell among them. :5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. :6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

The city of refuge was basically protective custody, a self-imposed prison to avoid being killed by the avenger of blood. The city of refuge had a court where the slayer could plead his case. What the slayer is claiming is that, yes, he killed someone and that is why the avenger is after him. But, no, he is not guilty of murder. It was an accident or self-defense or there was some circumstance that made this killing not murder. Basically, the city of refuge is Habeas Corpus in that the slayer gets his day in court, and protective custody in that it deters retaliation if he can reach the court before the avenger reaches him.

This is high motivation for the slayer to submit himself to the justice system, because until he does, it’s open season — the avenger has an unlimited hunting license. This transfers the responsibility of arrest from the police to the accused. It’s no longer the

duty of the cops to find and arrest him. The slayer, on the other hand, is desperate to get to the jailhouse to place himself under their protection away of the gun-sights of the avenger. He is highly motivated to get himself into custody as quickly as possible for his own safety's sake.

(We see hints of this in movies. You know the plot: a mobster is in custody and the police are trying to persuade him to cooperate. What finally elicits his cooperation is their threats to release him — he knows that on the streets he wouldn't last long with the mob after him.)

Once the slayer has arrived at and been accepted by the city of refuge, he is remanded for trial. If he is found innocent of murder (but guilty of manslaughter having caused a death by accident), he remains in the city of refuge until the high priest dies then he is free to go home, having, in modern terms, paid his debt to society for having accidentally killed someone. But if he is found guilty of murder, he is executed. The city of refuge is not a place for murders to hide.

This not only protects the innocent slayer (innocent of murder, not innocent of manslaughter) from the avenger, it also protects the avenger in that it recognizes the avenger's right to kill the slayer if the avenger can get to the slayer before the slayer can reach the safety of the city of refuge.

Let's take a not-so-far-fetched example. If a drunk driver kills your wife in an "accident," and in your anger you find him and kill him, under Torah law, revenge is your right, the law cannot touch you. But if the drunk is taken into custody, once he's in jail you cannot reach him. He is now in the hands of the court, and what the judge decides is right and just, that decision is the law. If the slayer serves ten years for manslaughter, that's it, he's paid his debt to society and you, the avenger, have no more recourse.

So if you want to settle the score, you have a right to do that. But you'd better do it quickly. Avenge your wife if you must but do it now; you can't keep revenge in abeyance to be used at a later time.

But to reiterate, none of this offers protection to a murderer. A murderer may find a few more days of life in a city of refuge, but when he is found guilty of murder, he will be executed.

All this makes sense. Today, if you kill a killer, you are likely to be arrested, which makes no sense at all. The law, if it cannot protect us, should at least get out of our way and allow us to protect ourselves. The law should be promoting justice, not running interference for felons.

I propose two changes in our law:

First, any non-felon American citizen should have the right to carry a concealed weapon. Violent crime would immediately fall along with a few street thugs.

And *second*, I want open season on violent felons. By that I mean, the law should not protect violent felons while in the act of committing a violent or near-violent felony. To say it differently, a felon abdicates his protection of law from the moment he commits a felony. The result of this would be far-reaching in that the law would be prohibited from acting against any citizen who acts against a violent felon.

The caveat would of course be that the citizen would have to be able to prove that the felon was indeed a felon, otherwise a whole new level of injustice would result, i.e., "I killed him because he was burglarizing my home," when in fact I killed him in his yard

and drug his body into my house to make it look like he was burglarizing my home. The issue is guilt and innocence, not technicality.

I don't think this is far-fetched or unreasonable.

American law does provide for something like that under the guise of self defense. But what exactly is self defense?

I once had a dispute with a policeman. Our neighborhood had had a rash of burglaries and he came to give our neighborhood watch advice. I asked him if I could shoot a burglar in my house. He said no, I could not, and instead of confronting the burglar, I should take my family to a safe room to avoid contact. I argued, but what if my kid is in a room on the other side of the house so that I have no idea if the burglar is a danger to my kid. Can I shoot the burglar in that case? The policeman assured me that if I shot the burglar that I would be arrested, unless I *knew* my child was in danger. Well how on earth am I supposed to know that? The policeman had no idea.

That's the conundrum we get into when we give rights to felons. The Bible has some different ideas.

[3] THE KINGS

1 Samuel 8:3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

That Samuel's sons took bribes was not inconsequential. Their corruption led Israel to demand a king against God's wishes. And thus the nation surrendered a great deal of its freedom because of bad judges.

1 Samuel 12:3 whose hand have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith?

This is how Samuel defends his life of service: he didn't take bribes. The point is that bribery blinds the judge to the truth. This entire verse is a right standard for public servants. This is additionally interesting because his son did take bribes.

2 Samuel 23:1 Now these be the last words of David... :3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

A lot of time had passed from Moses to David, about four centuries, but in that time, God had not changed. In God's mind still stirred the notion of justice. Kings are to be, above all, just.

1 Kings 3:27 Then the king [Solomon] answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

This story of Solomon and the two mothers points to the responsibility of courts to get it right, by whatever means. Justice and fairness is what the law is all about, but justice is impossible without first getting at the truth.

DNA testing and other forensic advances have been a great leap in this quest for judicial truth. But too often, courts let their political goals interfere. For instance, far too many murderers have escaped justice because of Miranda which is not a law at all but just a judicial decree. Judges too often lose sight of the intent of their office.

1 Kings 21:8 So she [Jezebel] wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. :9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people :10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. :13 ... Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

This murder was carefully arranged and was carried out to the letter. This is a classic example of (as I call it) “murder by false witness.” In other words, getting the court to do your dirty work for you, to “frame” your victim. And I note here that just because the court is the unwitting murder instrument, doesn't make it any less a murder. If, after the execution, the whole truth comes out, the murderer can't defend himself (or herself) by saying to the court, “Hey. I didn't kill him, *you* killed him.” I imagine there are just such examples in American case law.

So the two witnesses rule, which certainly helped Susanne against the scheming elders, did nothing to help poor Naboth. More was expected of the court.

On the positive side, we notice that there was enough law in Israel that this elaborate charade was necessary to murder Naboth. Jezebel couldn't just go kill him, she had to arrange this legal ruse. So law works. It just doesn't work all the time.

2 Chronicles 19:5 And he [Jehoshaphat] set judges in the land :6 And said to the judges...ye judge not for man but for the LORD... :7 there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons nor taking of gifts. :9 Thus shall ye do in fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.

King Jehoshaphat understood the responsibility of judges. First, they are themselves to be above reproach. Second, they are not to respect persons meaning do not give preferential treatment to people of status, including the ACLU. And third, judges are not to take bribes.

I will tell you a story of the second emperor of Persia, Cambyses. You will think it's grisly and it is.

One day Cambyses appointed a new supreme judge. Cambyses toured the new judge through the justice hall and sat him down behind the bench in the judge's chair.

While the new judge was getting the feel of his new environment, Cambyses said to him: “Just so you know, your predecessor took bribes, and I caught him at it. I had him skinned alive. That chair you're sitting in is upholstered with his skin. When you judge, you will sit in that chair.”

That's one judge I bet who never took bribes. Our judges should get a similar message. Legislate from the bench and there will be consequences.

[4] PSALMS

Psalms 94:1 O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

I get so weary of people who insist that justice is good and vengeance is bad when there is no clear distinction between the two. The only difference is political — when we like retribution we call it justice, when we don't like it we call it vengeance. The author of this verse makes no such distinction.

Psalms 94:15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness...

Righteousness is what we have a right to expect from our justice system.

Every time a murderer gets off, for whatever reason, the whole court system is blighted by wickedness. Every time an innocent person is convicted, for whatever reason, the whole court system is blighted by wickedness.

There is a legal notion: "I rather set free 100 guilty men than to convict one innocent man." That is nonsense, and is the court's excuse for dismissing its own failures.

God did not create courts to argue about tedious details of the law. Court's are not paid to acquit murderers to keep their conscience clear of convicting any innocent person. The court's are paid to *get it right* — convict the guilty *and* acquit the innocent. A failure on either side is monumental injustice.

Now, of course that's easier said than done. But technology has come a long way. For example, the discovery of DNA, and the invention of computers. We have those tools and others to determine innocence or guilt, and yet we still rely on juries which care less about the truth and more about legal impediments to justice such inadmissible evidence, rules of the court, and which side has the best attorney.

A mother who had murdered her two year old daughter was acquitted. And the reason for the acquittal, according to the jury, was that the prosecuting attorney didn't do a very good job. How does that have anything to do with innocence or guilt? That jury knew the defendant was guilty but they acquitted her anyway because they were judging the attorneys rather than the facts of the case. One day those jurors will face God, and I believe that child's blood will be on their hands. They will share the mother's guilt.

In my opinion, the jury system should be discarded and replaced with something else, something that assesses facts analytically rather than pitting the personalities and competence of opposing attorneys against each other. Think about it. Why should guilt and innocence have anything to do with the competence of the respective attorneys? Why should the defendant get off because he had a good attorney, or convicted because his attorney was a dufus? That attorneys spend so much time with their strategies of jury selection (slanting the jury to his favor) should by itself tell you that there is something rotten about our jury system.

That's trial by lot, and has little to do with facts. Our system has more in common with voodoo than with justice. I say let's get argument out of the courts and instead of argument, have some real analysis. God's law is clear enough. He is not concerned with the jots and tittles (as Jesus called it), the minutia of the law. God is interested in

innocence and guilt. That's it. That's what the law ought to be focused on, not all this other legal *crap!*

And get the defendant's personality out of the courtroom. An endearing smile, a celebrity status, and a shiny new suit have nothing to do with innocence and guilt. It is to the court's shame that the more likable a defendant, the more likely he will walk. This, more than anything else, is why the stupid jury system must go. Jurors are people, and people buy crap from good salesmen, and attorneys are trained to be good salesmen. And the best of them win. This is no way to run a justice system. That is not justice, and that is not what the law is intended to be. Why should the outcome of any trial, criminal or civil, spin on trivialities like attorney competence, defendant personality, and so-called rules of the court?

We should take the law out of the hands of the attorneys and judges, and give it to programmer analysts, who can do at least as good a job as the legalists have done, and I believe a whole lot better. Facts are what matter, not debate.

There was a time when debate and testimony was the best we had. But computers and analytical thinking and forensic evidence have since come into being. The world has advanced, but our jurisprudence system has not. It's time for an upgrade.

***Psalms 94:21** ...which frameth mischief by a law?*

There are times when the law itself becomes the instrument of crime — murder, theft, and more. The story above about Jezebel and Naboth is a perfect example. It unfortunately happens that a criminal in order to escape justice will frame someone else, a fall guy. And sometimes that fall guy will spend years in prison or even be executed for someone else's crime. So now there are three injustices: the actual crime, the fact that the criminal got away with it, and the fact that a fall guy paid the price.

But there are other kinds of "mischief by law." Politics is always hungry for new victims. Rent control eagerly transfers wealth from landlords to tenants. A recent expansion of eminent domain now allows governments to take a person's property and give it to a hotel developer. Those are just two examples of "framing mischief by law."

***Psalms 98:9** ... with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

That's the goal, isn't it? To judge with equity. Equal justice for all, just as God promises he one day will.

***Psalms 143:2** And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

This seems obscure but I think it means, why are you bothering to sue your employees? Did you ever expect anything better from them? In your opinion, nobody ever gets it right anyway, so don't take your grievances to court.

☛ ***Psalms 149:6** Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. :7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments*

upon the people. :8 To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. :9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

The American congress has a nasty habit of passing laws that apply to all of us but not to themselves. Their privileged position allows them to exempt themselves from their own laws. That is a great failing in our legal system that our law makers are above the law. Our representatives ought to be bound with legal chains, force them to be bound by their own laws.

[5] PROVERBS

Proverbs 7:22 ... as a fool to the correction of the stocks.

Apparently, the Jews used stocks. I guess they did not consider that a cruel and unusual punishment.

I also read this text to mean that the law ought to be binding on the courts and not the other way around. Our courts today ignore the law and do whatever they please, setting aside the law to impose their own political agenda, their tyrannical will, on the people. We are told that we are living in a democracy, but in fact we are living in a judicial tyranny. I would rather that the law bind our judges with chains.

Proverbs 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

By *gifts* the author means bribes. To take a bribe in any public office seems here to be a capital offense. This is a warning to any office holder and also a warning to those who vote him in: beware of greedy candidates — they'll serve their own interest and not the public interest. That's the definition of corruption.

Proverbs 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

This is exactly the point: freeing the guilty and convicting the innocent. This is liberal judges who think that abortion doctors who kill babies should be free while pro-lifers who picket their homes should go to jail for invasion of privacy.

Proverbs 17:23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.

Proverbs 17:26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.

Proverbs 18:5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Proverbs 19:5 *A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.*

Perjury is a crime and a serious one. Suppose perjury results in the execution of an innocent person. Then the perjury ought to be a capital crime. Imagine that the court is itself used as a weapon of crime just as surely as a gun.

Liberal courts, the ACLU, and lying attorneys get massive judgments against businesses that do nothing wrong at all, thus using the courts as instruments of extortion to *overthrow the righteous*. That's not what courts are for. We should not elect such people, appoint them, or allow them into public office, or have influence of any kind.

Proverbs 20:8 *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.*

As much as I detest our legal system (with its corrupt and despotic judges creating their own law), a legal system of judges and police power is inescapably necessary. That's why God gave law, to make criminals afraid of justice. Without courts, anarchy would rule and there'd be no safety anywhere. That we have any civility at all, we owe to the courts. Awful, isn't it?

Proverbs 20:26 *A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.*

Good judges punish the wicked. I have fanaticized that probation officers might be personally liable for the evil done by the criminals they release. So that if a child abuser on parole murders a child, then the family can sue the parole officer who released him.

☛ ***Proverbs 21:3*** *To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.*

This is my favorite verse on the subject of law, and it is really important. It is saying that your justice system is more important than your religion. How you deal with matters of social justice is more important than going to church. How do you impress God? Help your fellow man with right justice. That's what the verse says.

Proverbs 21:15 *It is joy to the just to do judgment...*

The nature of just people is not just that they do justice but that they enjoy it. Don't shun jury duty, seek it. Doing justice is a noble thing to do and it's a pleasure. And besides, it's sometimes fun to see the bad guy get his come-uppance.

Proverbs 24:15 *Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place.*

Evil people use any means, including the courts, including the internet, to take from honest people. I'm wondering, if LifeLock is really able to protect people from identity thief, why is the government, whose job it is to protect us, and its police powers not protecting us?

Proverbs 24:23 ...It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

For instance, judges and jurors like celebrities — like football players, like Senators — and therefore let football players and Senators get away with murder. That's a really bad thing.

Proverbs 24:28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.

Since the courts have so much power, even the power to take life, it is really important to *not bear false witness (Exodus 20:17, the 10th commandment)*. That's why perjury is a punishable crime because it turns the court into an instrument of injustice.

☛ ***Proverbs 25:2*** It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

God's job is to atone, cover, and forgive sin. But that's not what judges and courts are for. Their job is to do justice. When a judge forgives crime and calls it mercy, that's not mercy at all, that's an aberration of justice and he should be removed from the bench.

Jesus said, "I have *not* come to destroy the law." We need our law. God is not an anarchist.

Proverbs 28:17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

Let's take this literally. If a murderer wants to commit suicide, let him. In fact, encourage him to. I'll provide the rope. Let's start with Theodore Frank. Why is that monster still alive who tortured a child to death?

Proverbs 29:4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

Judges who take bribes do more than just damage the legal system with unfairness, they destroy the law and ultimately the country.

America right now is in a very dangerous situation and it's been coming for a very long time. One kind of bribery is getting votes. Our officials have promised bigger and bigger entitlements just to get votes. Well now that super huge amount of national debt amassed to pay off voters with huge entitlements is on the edge of bringing down the whole country.

Proverbs 29:14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

I wish there were such judges. The truth is, the poor cannot afford justice, and so the rich, who can afford attorney fees, always win because the poor can't survive the cost. And Small Claims doesn't help because that's not where the real battles are fought.

- ☛ *Proverbs 31:8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such are appointed to destruction. :9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.*

This is an important abortion text. Come to the defense of those who cannot defend themselves. And of course the most helpless of those who are appointed to destruction are the unborn. You really should be speaking out in defense of the unborn, or at the very least vote pro-life.

[6] ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes 3:16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.

In the courts, where we expect justice and righteousness to prevail, even there we see wickedness.

Ecclesiastes 7:7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.

Payoff and bribery. The “good ol’ boys.” Obama paying off the unions and Acorn for getting him elected. It does indeed destroy the heart to see that our government is so controlled by gangsters.

- ☛ *Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

[7] ISAIAH

Isaiah 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment ... but now murderers. :22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water. :23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards:26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning...

Paraphrase: :21 The faithful city used to have judges who defended innocent, but now the judges are murderers. :22 Justice and crime are now intermingled. :23 Judges are in the pockets of the criminals and take their bribes. :26 God wants to restore judges who

judge by the law, and not kings who, like activists judges, change the law to whatever they want it to be.

Isaiah 5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil... :23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.*

What are judges willing to do for bribes? Acquit the guilty and convict the innocent.

Isaiah 9:7 *...to establish it with judgment and with justice...*

Always on God's mind is the justice system, not just the courts but the whole society's sense of fair play.

Isaiah 10:1 *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed. :2 To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!*

All these judges and their "opinions," they are all grievous. Judges shouldn't have "opinions," they should just do what the law says. Too many judges have no sense of justice and make the law a sham with their fiat decrees..

Isaiah 16:5 *And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacles of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.*

God's throne is a court of mercy more than judgment, truth (facts) is the goal, righteousness is the objective. Unlike today where political agenda is the goal of far too many judges. Our judges don't want truth and justice, they want power.

Isaiah 24:5 *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.*

That's what judges do: ignore the constitution and create their own law to suit themselves. They change the ordinance.

Isaiah 26:9 *...when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*

Isaiah 51:7 *Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law...*

God defines righteousness as loving the law; that is, social justice.

Isaiah 56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Isaiah 59:4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. :9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. :14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Here is a plea for truth: Abortion tortures to death unborn children. How's that for a chilling truth? How would you like your arms and legs sliced off with scalpel? Or your skin burned off with saline as you silently scream while dying in agony over an hour? How about some truth for a change? That would be refreshing.

Isaiah 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for a burnt offering.

It is justice that God wants from us, not religiosity, especially religiosity that is a pretext to helping yourself to someone else's stuff.

[8] JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 5:1 ...see...if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth...

Jeremiah 5:28 They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

Jeremiah 7:6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood...

“Innocent blood” is a euphemism for children. Don't kill children. But in America, killing children is big business and an established right. How evil we have become.

Jeremiah 22:3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.

Jeremiah 22:16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? Saith the LORD.

How do you know that you know God? You know that you know God if you are fair and kind to the poor and the needy.

Jeremiah 33:15 *In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.*

Our hope for a Davidic messiah is intertwined with our hope for a fair justice system. Our lamenting over injustice causes us to long for messiah who we expect will judge fairly.

Lamentations 3:36 *To subvert a man in his cause, the LORD approveth not.*

Everyone has a right to plead his cause in court. But in our system, one of the ways to “subvert a man in his cause” is to sue small businesses because they can’t afford to defend themselves. And that it costs frivolous plaintiffs nothing to try, invites frivolous lawsuits. That is subverting justice.

[9] EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 5:6 *And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, the have not walked in them.*

This is condemnation on those who change the law. I believe this applies as well to those judges and law-makers who are destroying our constitution by bending it and twisting to make it say what it does not say. Remember: *the* law was the constitution of Israel and the foundation of their justice system. When you screw up the justice system, you screw up the law. That’s exactly God’s complaint here.

There are thousands of examples of judicial abuse and abdication of judicial responsibility. Abortion on demand is one, a so-called “right” that the courts invented out of thin air thus destroying our constitutional “right-to-life” established by the first amendment. Just as God said: you’ve *changed my judgments into wickedness*.

Ezekiel 18:8 *He that...executed true judgment between man and man, :9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly, he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.*

Ezekiel 20:11 *And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. :13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments...then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. :18 But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments...:19 I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them.*

Israel’s sin was not just sin, it was lawlessness and injustice.

[10] MINOR PROPHETS

Amos 5:12 ...they take a bribe...

Amos 5:15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate:

Amos 6:12 ...ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:

You have turned your justice system into something bad tasting, ugly and awful. By a whole series of bad court decisions, American law has become that: bad tasting.

Micah 3:9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. **:11** The heads thereof judge for reward...

Micah 3:1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment? **:2** Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones. **:3** Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.

It was your job, you government leaders and judges, to understand how to judge justly. Instead of using your office for justice, you use it to skin the people and enrich yourselves. That's high corruption and abuse of power. God paints a pretty vivid picture of judicial corruption

Micah 6:8 ...what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with they God.

We too often think of commandments as spiritual. That's wrong. Commandments are very temporal, they are what the judicial system is made from, how to treat each other by law. God instructs us to "do justly"; that means civil law.

We sometimes see justice and mercy at odds with each other. It depends on who we are showing mercy to. Mercy to criminals is not very merciful to victims, is it?

Micah 7:3 ...the judge asketh for a reward...

Habakkuk 1:4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

Zephaniah 3:4 ...they have done violence to the law.

By corrupting the law they do violence not only to people but to the law itself.

Zechariah 7:9 ...Execute true judgment, and shew mercy...

Zechariah 8:16 ...execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.

Zechariah 8:17 ...love no false oath.

Malachi 2:8 *But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. :9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.*

[11] EZRA

The Jews were removed from their homeland (Diaspora) and then returned to it (post-Diaspora). When they returned, did their attitude towards their law change? It did.

Ezra 7:26 *And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.*

From then on, no Jew would ever bow to an idol for murder a child. They took their law very seriously.

Notice the different penalties for different crimes. Notice that torture and dismemberment are not on Ezra's list. The Jews, like Americans, didn't much care for "cruel and unusual" punishments. Even when they burned someone, they killed them first *then* burned them. I know there is such a verse (of someone first stoned to death then burned) but I can't find it right now. I hope I will then I'll include it here.

[12] THE GOSPELS

We Christians somehow have gotten the idea that Jesus' grace dispensed with the law. That is not true. Jesus never had such a thing in mind.

Matthew 5:17 *Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. :18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

Civilization runs on law. Without law, all societies would disintegrate back to primitive behaviors and we would once again eat each other.

[13] ACTS

Acts 18:14 *And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: :15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of*

your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. :16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

This Roman judge, Gallio, was a wise man. He understood what courts are for and what they are not for. It is not the business of courts to intercede into matters of theology. Today's courts have injected themselves into all sorts of areas that they ought not to be meddling. And legislating from the bench should be expressly forbidden in the constitution.

Acts 19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. :39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

This is what laws are for. Let's decide this by law, and not by mob rule.

Acts 25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

Fair enough — unless, of course, a man was a slave who found himself in the coliseum facing lions or an even crueller death. So Roman fairness applied to some but not others.

[14] PAUL

This next verse is one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible.

Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Too many Christians wrongly understand this to mean that we should forgive violent felons and not send them to prison or execution.

The verse doesn't mean that at all. It means, don't be a vigilante, don't avenge yourself because that is what policemen and courts are for. The text continues with —

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. :2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power [meaning civil authorities] resisteth the ordinance of God... :4 ...if thou do that which is evil, be thou afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain.

And that is the point. Don't avenge yourselves, it is God's job to do it for you and he does that with the judicial system, the police, the courts, the judges, the executioners, and the law. They are all ordained of God.

1 Corinthians 5:3 For I...have judged already...

Paul could shirk from his duty to judge because of past faults, yet here he is, judging. And so must we. When you are on jury duty, if you acquit a defendant just because Jesus said “judge not,” then you make yourself guilty with the criminal.

Paul was arguably the most forgiven man on the planet. If anyone were inclined to beg off saying, “Hey, I’m not worthy to judge anyone of anything,” that would be Paul. But as an apostle, he was required to judge, and that is exactly what he did. Not because he had a mean streak but from love. He genuinely wanted the best for everyone, and often the best that can happen to a sinner is to be fairly judged.

[15] CONCLUSION

When I was collecting material for this article, I was amazed, not by the severity of the law and its punishments, but by the frequency of its Biblical discussion. What surprised me was just how fixated God is on Israel’s judicial system. I suppose therefore that he must also pay a great deal of attention to our legal system.

That God revealed civil law makes a strong point: God wants us to get along; I mean, he *really* wants us to get along, so much so that his primary revelation is law and the bible’s constant discussion of it.

That should suggest to us that we, all of us, ought to take our politics and our legal system seriously, and to understand when our freedoms are being stolen and that we ought to more assertively challenge government, and defend our freedoms. Our liberty was bought with the blood of brave patriots, and it is a sin to allow governments and courts to continually erode our liberty without even a contest.

God’s grievance with Israel was that he had given them freedom and they had squandered it. We seem to be repeating their example. It appears that God loves our liberty more than we do.