



Exodus

Book of the Covenant

Interpreting the Text:

1. What is the Biblical attitude to slavery? What ironies are there given the events of Exodus that lead up to chapter 21?
2. How should we understand the principle, an eye for an eye? How do you understand this passage both in relationship with other ancient near east artifacts, like the Code of Hammurabi, and later teachings like Jesus' in the Gospels?
3. Can we discern any principles underlying this collection of laws? What was God's priority in the giving of these rules?

Applying the Text:

1. These laws deal largely with how we relate to one another, what can they tell us about how to live in community? How does the text suggest we should treat those around us? Do your personal values line up with those laid out in the text?
2. These laws are still being brought up in contentious discussions about slavery, abortion, and appropriate justice. What role should these laws play in contemporary national governance? What are the risks if they are misinterpreted or anachronistically applied?
3. It is often suggested that rules are written in response to something that has taken place. It may be that many of these laws, especially those that are more specific in nature, refer to problems that have come up for the Israelites. What kinds of topics would come up if God were to provide a set of laws today?