

Torah Studies – Statutes #520-521

Statute 520: When you are traveling and pass through a neighbour’s vineyard or field, you may pluck the fruits/foods growing there sufficient to satisfy your hunger.

Statute 521: But while you may eat your fill, if passing through a neighbour’s land, you may not harvest any of your neighbour’s crops to take with you. Only take what you need to eat, but take none for later.

Deuteronomy 23:24-25 “When thou comest into thy neighbour's **vineyard**, then thou mayest eat grapes thy **fill** at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.”

Key Word Study:

| Key Word | Strong’s Number | Hebrew Word | Meaning |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| VINEYARD | 3754 | kerem | a garden or vineyard: - vines, (increase of the) vineyard (-s), vintage |
| FILL | 7648 | śôba’ | satisfaction (of food or (figuratively) joy): - fill, full (-ness), satisfying, be satisfied |

Eating from Your Neighbour’s Field:

Deuteronomy gives broad permission to eat your fill from a neighbor’s vineyard and grain field, so long as you don’t gather in a vessel or cut with an implement. Famously, the disciples of Yahshua gather grain on the Sabbath, earning the Pharisees’ wrath not for theft but for violating Shabbat.

The Torah’s law stands behind a passage of the New Testament (Matthew 12:1-2; parallels in Mark 2 and Luke 6; trans. NRSV):

- At that time Yahshua went through the cornfields on the Sabbath; His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, ‘Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.’

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This Statute has caused a lot of discussion and commentary among Bible scholars. Is it okay to just enter anyone's field and eat one's fill? Are there limits? Or can anyone, from anywhere, at anytime come into another person's field and eat his/her fill? Obviously, if everyone in town made it a habit to enter a farmer's field and chow down, the farmer would eventually be deprived of a harvest.

Statutes layer upon related Statutes. So, while Deuteronomy 23 is fairly open-ended, there are other Statutes which add definition to it. For example, In Leviticus 19:9-10, we find the Statutes regarding harvesting a field. The edges of the field are to be left, specifically for the poor and the "alien" (traveler from a far land) to eat from. Similarly, the fruit of vineyards were to be harvested once. But, when more fruit ripened later, after the initial harvest, that fruit was to be left – again for the poor and "alien".

- *Leviticus 19:9-10 – “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I Am Yahweh your God...”*
- *See also: Deuteronomy 24:19-21, Luke 12:13-21, Ruth Ch. 2*

Thus, we find that generosity and hospitality was built-in to Torah. But the implied message when combining these two Statute concepts is that passers-by were welcomed to glean from the second harvest, or the outer edges of the field, the fruits of which were left for their enjoyment. But, the harvesting of these leavings was not to be done by travelers. They were only to eat their fill while passing through. The bulk of the leavings in a field were intended to feed the poor, as we see in the story of Ruth.

Torah Studies – Statutes #522-524

Statute 522: If we see someone’s animals or livestock having escaped their enclosure and beginning to stray, we are not to ignore the problem. Having seen the need, it is our responsibility to do what we can to restore the animals to their owner.

Statute 523: If you chance upon a stray animal(s) and do not know who the animal’s owner is, bring the animal(s) to your home to care for them. Put the word out to find the owner. And when the animal’s owner comes to seek his missing livestock/animal(s), fully restore it to him.

Statute 524: Follow the same procedures if you find lost items. First, seek to restore the lost item(s) to its owner. If the owner cannot be found, bring the lost item to your house and put the word out to let the owner know where to come to find you. When he/she comes, fully restore it to him/her.

Deuteronomy 22:1-3 “Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and **hide thyself** from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not **nigh** unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt **restore** it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.”

Key Word Study:

| Key Word | Strong's Number | Hebrew Word | Meaning |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| HIDE THYSELF | 5956 | ‘alam | to veil from sight, conceal in any way, blind, dissembler, hide (self), secret (thing) |
| NIGH | 7138 | qârôb | near, nigh at hand, near (of kin), neighbour |
| RESTORE | 7725 | shûb | return to the starting point, recompense, recover, rescue, restore, retrieve, render (again) |

Torah Studies – Statutes #522-524 (*continued*)

Bible Perspectives on Restoring What Was Lost:

We well know that Yahweh keeps His Own Torah. But here are a few beautiful ways He keeps this set of Statutes, on our behalf:

The Bible says that God restores what was lost and broken through compassion, mercy, and love. The Bible also says that God will restore fortunes, relationships, and even lost years.

Bible verses about restoration of what was lost:

- **Deuteronomy 30:3-13:** God will restore everything lost, gather people back together, and bring them back to the land of their ancestors
- **Job 42:10b:** God restored Job's fortunes, marriage, relationships, children, and allowed him to live a long life
- **Luke 19:10:** Yahshua said, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost"

Torah Studies – Statutes #525-527

Statute 525: Do no unrighteousness in Judgment.

Statute 526: Do not be unjust or unrighteous in your weighings or measurements.

Statute 527: Use only correct balances, measurements, and containers (an ephah is a container that is about the size of a bushel basket, and a hin is approximately 5.7 liters).

Leviticus 19:35-36 “Ye shall do no **unrighteousness** in **judgment**, in **meteyard**, in weight, or in measure. **Just balances**, just **weights**, a just **ephah**, and a just **hin**, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” (See also Deuteronomy 25:13-14.)

Key Word Study:

| Key Word | Strong's Number | Hebrew Word | Meaning |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|
| UNRIGHTEOUSNESS | 5766 | עֵוָה evel | (moral) <i>evil</i> : - iniquity, perverseness, unjust, unrighteousness, wickedness |
| JUDGMENT | 4941 | מִשְׁפָּט mishpât | a <i>verdict</i> , including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly <i>justice</i> |
| METEYARD | 4060 | מִדְּבָר middâh | <i>extension</i> , that is, height or breadth; also a <i>measure</i> (including its standard), tribute |
| JUST | 6664 | צְדָקָה tsedeq | the <i>right</i> , also <i>equity</i> or <i>prosperity</i> , <i>righteous cause</i> |
| BALANCES | 3976 | מֹזְנֵן mô'zên | a pair of <i>scales</i> : - balances, to weigh, scales |
| WEIGHTS | 68 | אֶבֶן 'eben | <i>build</i> ; a <i>stone</i> , plummet, chalk-, hail-, bead-, sling-] stone, weight (-s) |
| EPHAH | 374 | אֶפְחָה 'êphâh | an <i>ephah</i> or measure for grain; hence a <i>measure</i> in general |
| HIN | 1969 | הִין hîyn | a <i>hin</i> or liquid measure |

Torah Studies – Statutes #525-527 (*continued*)

Bible Perspectives on Just Weights and Measures:

“Yahweh detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with Him” (Proverbs 11:1). God hates any kind of fraud. Fraudulent practices have been around since He rebooted human history after he booted Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. Merchants cheated people by putting their fingers on the payload side of a balance scale so they could charge more money for less product.

Now cheaters try to institutionalize their advantage. Politicians gerrymander congressional districts so their voters will outnumber voters from the opposition party. But this Statute set applies all across the board. Be just with your weights and measures. Anything less is a form of stealing.

- **Proverbs 11:1** “Dishonest scales *are* an abomination to Yahweh, But a just weight *is* His delight.”
- **Deuteronomy 25:13-16** “You shall not have two differing weights in your bag, one heavy and one light. You shall not have two differing measures in your house, one large and one small. You must maintain accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.”
- **Proverbs 20:10** “Differing weights and unequal measures—both are detestable to Yahweh.”
- **Proverbs 20:23** “Unequal weights are detestable to Yahweh, and dishonest scales are no good.”
Micah 6:10-11 “Can I forget any longer, O house of the wicked, the treasures of wickedness and the short ephah, which is accursed? Can I excuse dishonest scales or bags of false weights?”
- **Matthew 7:2** “For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
- **Luke 6:38** “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

Torah Studies – Statutes #528-532

Statute 528: 1/10 of all your income (whether produce, animals, or money) is to be given to Yahweh as tithe, in recognition of His true Ownership and provision.

Statute 529: If you want to buy back Yahweh’s tenth of the grain or fruit, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent.

Statute 530: If you raise animals, tithe them to Yahweh by counting off every tenth animal from your herds and flocks and set them apart for Yahweh as holy.

Statute 531: When determining what to give to Yahweh as tithe, you may not pick and choose between good and bad animals, and you may not substitute one for another in order to give Yahweh the lesser quality and keep the best for yourself.

Statute 532: If you exchange one animal for another, both the original animal and its substitute will be considered holy and cannot be bought back.

Leviticus 27:30-33 “And all the **tithe** of the **land**, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is **holy** unto the LORD. And if a man will at all **redeem** ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.”

Key Word Study:

| Key Word | Strong's Number | Hebrew Word | Meaning |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| TITHE | H4643 | ma'āsêr | a <i>tenth</i> ; especially a <i>tithe</i> : - tenth (part), tithe (-ing) |
| LAND | H776 | 'erets | to <i>be firm</i> ; the <i>earth</i> , common, country, earth, field, ground, land, nations, way, world |
| HOLY | H6944 | qôdesh | a <i>sacred</i> place or thing; consecrated (thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), holiness, (X most) holy (X day, portion, thing) |
| REDEEM | H1350 | gâ'al | to <i>redeem</i> (according to the Oriental law of kinship), to <i>be the next of kin</i> (and as such to <i>buy back</i> a relative's property...) purchase |

Torah Studies – Statutes #528-532 (*continued*)

A tithe of everything, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees or any other increase in your house, belongs to Yahweh; it is holy to Yahweh. Whoever would redeem any of their non-monetary tithe must pay a fifth of the value to it. Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to Yahweh. No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution in an attempt to cheat Yahweh. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.

Cross References:

Gen 14:20, Gen 28:22; Num 18:21-24; Deu 12:5-6, Deu 14:22-23; 2Chron 31:5-6, 2Chron 31:12; Neh 10:37-38, Neh 12:44, Neh 13:5, Neh 13:12; Mal 3:8-10; Mat 23:23; Luk 11:42, Luk 18:12; Heb 7:5-9