



**SAVED TO SERVE**  
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**EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH**

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will study the meaning and context behind the phrase “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” in the Old & New Testament. We will then make present day applications of how this applies to us as followers of Jesus.
2. What does Exodus 21:23-25 say?  

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3. Many critics point to this verse in contrast to Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:38, 39 to suggest that the Bible is full of contradictions. What were some situations where the “eye for eye” principle was to be implemented? Exodus 21:22-24, 26-27  

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4. What was the “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” principle classified as in Israelite society? Exodus 21:1; Leviticus 24:20, 22  

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5. Who was an Israelite to go to if another person had physically hurt him, murdered someone, or broken the law? Exodus 21:22; Deuteronomy 19:18-21  

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6. **Note:** Notice that these principles are under the heading in your Bible as “Divers Laws & Ordinances.” These were guiding principles to be exercised in a court setting by the civil authority - the judges. If someone wronged another, that individual could bring the other person to a court of law to receive fair compensation for the pain they had inflicted. It was not meant to be a rule to advocate for personal vengeance.
7. Read Matthew 5:38-39, 44. What did Jesus mean when He said mentioned “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” but said to turn the other cheek? **Answer:** It is clear from scripture that the Jews had misunderstood and perverted God’s laws and judgments. The Jews had come to use the “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” principle to exact personal vengeance upon others. Jesus was teaching them that we should not seek to repay evil for evil but love and pray for the conversion of those who mistreat us.
8. Let us confirm that the Jews did not have a correct understanding of God’s moral law or the civil laws that were given to them, and therefore, Jesus had to expound to them the truth. Which moral laws did Jesus explain in Matthew 5, and what did He also say was a violation of them? Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28  

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9. What are we counseled in Romans 12:19? To whom does vengeance belong?  

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10. What does God promise to do when we take His counsel of not taking vengeance upon others? Proverbs 20:22; 1 Peter 3:9  

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11. Read Ephesians 4:31. What will be the result if we do not put away the sins of anger, bitterness, and malice from us? Ephesians 4:30  

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12. **Note:** We will now transition to examine the accounts of individuals who exercised personal vengeance against others and thus failed to exemplify the character of Jesus.
13. What did Amnon do to Tamar, the sister of Absalom? 2 Samuel 13:1, 14  

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a) What did Absalom do to Ammon? 2 Samuel 13:22, 28-29 (Reflection: How do we respond to our siblings and family members when they hurt us or someone we love?)

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14. What did John do when he saw another person casting out devils in Jesus' name? Luke 9:49-50

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a) Similarly, what do SDA conference leaders do to those who are not under their jurisdiction, but who are still preaching Bible truth? Matthew 21:23; Luke 9:49

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**“James and John had thought that in checking this man they had had in view their Lord's honor; they began to see that they were jealous for their own. They acknowledged their error, and accepted the reproof of Jesus, “Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me.” None who showed themselves in any way friendly to Christ were to be repulsed. There were many who had been deeply moved by the character and the work of Christ, and whose hearts were opening to Him in faith; and the disciples, who could not read motives, must be careful not to discourage these souls.** When Jesus was no longer personally among them, and the work was left in their hands, they must not indulge a narrow, exclusive spirit, but manifest the same far-reaching sympathy which they had seen in their Master.” {DA 437.6}

15. What did James and John say when the Samaritans rejected Jesus? Luke 9:51-56 (Reflection: What spirit do we manifest when we desire the worst upon those who reject us when we live for God or do evangelism?)

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16. If we are manifesting the “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” spirit now, it shows that we are not ready for the coming last day crisis. What did Peter do as retaliation when Jesus was taken prisoner? John 18:10-12

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a) In these last days, are we to fight against our persecutors? How was Jesus led to the cross of Calvary? Acts 8:32

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17. What did Moses say and do when the Israelites murmured against him for water? Numbers 20:1-3, 7-11

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a) As a result of him manifesting anger and malice toward the Israelites, what was his punishment from God? Numbers 20:12

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18. **Note:** Examine yourself - what kind of spirit do you manifest toward your church brethren? Do you respond in unholy anger and hold grudges against one another? If so, we will never be sealed by the Holy Spirit or enter into the heavenly promised land in that condition. Let us look now at accounts where individuals manifested a godly, forgiving spirit against those who had wronged them.

19. Why did Aaron and Miriam speak against Moses in Numbers 12:1? Likewise, what sin should we guard ourselves against?

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a) How did Moses respond? Numbers 12:9-13; Matthew 5:44

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20. How did Joseph's brothers feel toward him, and what did they do to him? Genesis 37:5; 23, 24, 28

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a) With Joseph's position of power in Egypt, what could he have done to his brothers, but what did he do instead? Genesis 45:1, 4-5

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21. When Stephen was being stoned by his own people/church for preaching the truth, what did he pray? Acts 7:59-60

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22. Whose prayer was Stephen imitating? Luke 23:33-34

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23. Likewise, we must follow Jesus' steps in order to be saved and overcome a revengeful spirit. What did Jesus not do which He requires of us as well? 1 Peter 2:21-23

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24. As long as we are not compromising principles of our faith from the Bible, what should we seek to do according to Romans 12:18?

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25. What encouragement can we get from the words of King Hezekiah? 2 Chronicles 32:8

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26. How can we overcome the evil in our hearts and subdue the evil in the hearts of our enemies? Romans 12:21

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