

Exodus Chapter 23

- God continues to give us parameters to live within, boundaries – which we need to live in any kind of culture or social environment.

V: 1 This is a prohibition against conspiracy:

Conspiracy: a plan or agreement formulated in secret, by two or more persons to commit an unlawful, harmful, or treacherous act.

- Ours is the God of truth, do not raise or make a false report, don't join with the wicked in being un-truthful.

9th Commandment:

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

Psalm 31:5 “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.”

Psalm 51:6 “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:...”

“Put not thine hand with the wicked...”

- To be an unrighteous witness, or anything else for that matter.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 “¹⁴Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

V: 2 Don't follow a mob to do evil, don't join the voice of a mob to pervert justice.

Matthew 27:20 “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.”

Luke 23:21 “But they cried, saying, crucify Him, crucify Him.”

V: 3 Don't show favor or partiality in a dispute.

Acts 10:34 “... of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”

V: 4-5 If you see your enemies ox or donkey, his livestock going astray – you are to bring it back to him.

- If you see the donkey of someone who doesn't like you and his donkey has laid down under his burden and won't get up and you think to yourself – oh too bad and would just as soon keep on walking – you should stop and help him.

Jesus wasn't teaching us anything new on the sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5:43-44 “⁴³Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

V: 6-7 We're not to pervert the judgment of the poor, stay clear of false matters.

- Do not slay innocent or righteous people, the wicked will not be justified.
- This is speaking about a situation where if someone is on trial, how bearing false witness against them could result in their death – speak truth in judgment.

V: 8 Again relative to judgment, no bribes.

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

V: 9 Again, do not oppress the strangers in our midst, because they were once strangers in a foreign land.

Exodus 22:21 “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

- It's always sad when someone is victimized in a certain way, when they turn around and do the same thing to someone else. God tells us not to, and Jesus helps us to break that cycle.

Now we come to the laws concerning the Sabbaths:

V: 10-11 The land gets a Sabbath. 6 years plant & harvest, but the 7th year the fields are to go fallow, the vineyards and orchards are to be left alone.

- Besides giving the land a rest, this is also part of the welfare system: the poor can come and take what they need for food.
- Violation of this law ultimately led to the Babylonian captivity.

- After they had been in the land of promise for 490 years, Jeremiah prophesied their captivity, during which time the land was given its rest, 1 year for every 7 or 70 years of captivity.

V: 12 Everyone and every thing gets a day of rest, a day to be refreshed in the Lord.

Matthew 11:28-30 ²⁸“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

V: 13 All the things that I've said to you – be circumspect: 2 Timothy 3:16

- Circumspect ^(H8104) “shamar”- take heed to; observe; regard; watch carefully.
- Do not speak the names of the pagan gods.

Romans 16:19 “... but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple / ignorant concerning evil.”

V: 14-15 Three mandatory feasts:

1st Unleavened bread / Passover – commemorating their deliverance from Egypt.

- And none shall appear before Him empty – in other words: bring a sacrifice.

V: 16 2nd – the feast of “Pentecost” or “First fruits” which took place 50 days after the Passover.

- 3rd – the feast of “Ingathering”, the winter harvest or “Succoth” or “Tabernacles” or “Booths”, which takes place 10 months after Pentecost.

V: 17-19 Re-iterating: 3 mandatory feasts for all the men.

- There is to be no leaven mixed with any of the sacrifices.
- They are to offer the first of the first fruits; nothing but the very best.
- God more than deserves our very best.

“Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk.”

- This same admonition is mentioned two more times in the OT (Exodus 34:26 & Deuteronomy 14:21).

- There was a pagan Egyptian ritual, a fertility ritual which involved taking a young kid of the goats and boiling it in it's mother's milk. They would then take the broth and sprinkle it over their field, orchards, and vineyards supposedly causing them to multiply and produce abundantly during the next season.
- God is saying don't do that, don't do what the pagans do. (Good rule for today)
- Later the religious leaders would take this simple rule and say that you couldn't have dairy products with meat, just in case the beef from the cow was somehow related to the cheese.
- They've taken it to you can't have cheese with poultry either – milking chickens is so unconscionable anyway.... but that is not what God intended.

Genesis 18:8 “And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”

V: 20-21 An “Angel” to keep thee in the way, to bring thee into the place prepared ahead of time.

- This “Angel” will have the name of the Lord – Yahweh / Jehovah in Him.
- They have already met this Angel – it is none other than “the Angel of the Lord” – Jesus.

1st time we see the Angel of the Lord is with Hagar as she fled from her mistress:

Genesis 16:10 “And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.”

- The Angel of the Lord appears to Abraham and the Angel of the Lord later wrestles with Jacob.
- “The” Angel of the Lord is a reference to Jesus, in this case a “Theophony” – another pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus.
- The fact that this “Angel” has the ability to forgive sins is proof that this is a Theophony because only God can forgive sins.

Luke 5:21 “And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sin, but God alone?”

- There would be times coming up where the Angel of the Lord would not necessarily forgive their trespasses, but sent serpents into the camp and many died, He also smote them Himself like when Balam taught Balak how to bring a curse upon the children of Israel, when they went into the women of Edom and the Angel of the Lord began to smite them, and twenty four thousand were killed in one day.

V: 22- 23 But if you'll obey his voice: obedience is the trigger / key to hearing God's voice.

- Then: God will be an enemy to their enemies, and an adversary to their adversaries.
- God's Angel will go before them and bring them into the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizites, the Canaanites, Hivites, and the Jebusites.
- God will cut them off.

Romans 8:31 "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

V: 24 Do not bow down before their Gods, nor serve them, or do the things that they do, their form of worship.

- Two Babylons: Alexander Hislop (Available on-line), details how the church and various denominations have engaged in various practices and traditions that trace their roots back to Babylon.
- God is saying that I don't want you to worship Me as they do, don't copy their forms of worship.

Jesus taught us:

John 4:24 "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

- We need to be very careful about ritualistic forms of worship, not getting tied down to anything that is not led of the Spirit.

V: 25-26 The promise is that as they serve God, He will bless, He will provide.

- God will bring prosperity, and health – none will cast their young – no miscarriages, no barrenness, God will fulfill their days with long life.
- They will flourish.

Psalm 1:1-3 "¹Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doeth he meditate day and night. ³And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

- These last few chapters, Exodus 21-23 may seem somewhat mundane, reiterating the 10 commandments – but this is what David was referring to when he exhorted us to mediate in His law.

- God wants us to know how to treat our neighbors, how to take care of our animals, and those around us – how he wants us to live.

V: 27 Continuing in the promises and benefits:

- God will send fear into Israel's enemies, He will destroy them, and cause them to flee before Israel.
- Israel has experienced this even in modern times:
 - In 1973 Syria and Egypt, backed by Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia launched an attack against Israel which they code named "The War of Annihilation" – they intended to annihilate Israel, and almost did. The "Yom Kippur War".
 - The surprise attack took place on Yom Kippur and Israel was initially overwhelmed.
 - They had build static defenses along the Suez Canal called the BarLev line, much like the Maginot line in France during WWII.
 - The Israelies were overconfident and these fortification were lightly manned by about 500 soldiers. 70,000 Egyptian troops attacked along this line along with several hundred tanks.
 - The Egyptians overran the Bar Lev fortifications within 24 hours and essentially there was nothing between the Suez and Tel Aviv except 90 old and battered tanks.
 - Up in the Golan, Syria attacked with 8,000 tanks – 800 more than Hitler deployed against Russia when he started his offensive during WWII.
 - The Syrians quickly overran the Israeli lines and were within ½ mile of the Golan Headquarters when for what are still unknown reasons the Syrians stopped their advance.
 - The Syrian force that was approaching the Golan Headquarters was an armored brigade that consisted of over 100 tanks and various armored personnel carriers. The Golan headquarter had two tanks which had already been taken out of action.
 - Zvki, a young Israeli lieutenant had to hitch hike up to the Golan Headquarters and said "I'm a tank commander do you have any tanks?" The response was that we have one, but in ½ an hour we can get one more.
 - Zvki, then unloaded the dead bodies out of the one tank and fueled it up. The 2nd tank joined him and they took off towards the Syrian Armored brigade.

V: 27 (cont.)

- When they got to their firing positions he gave the command to open fire. His tank started firing taking out two Syrian tanks. He popped his hatch open and looked, but the other tank was not firing, it had been taken out of action.
- Realizing that he was in a bad spot he decided to go over the hill, actually there was a series of hills. He would roll over a hill, pop a couple of Syrian tanks, then down the other side, then up again and hit a couple more racing back and forth from hill to hill all the while reporting back to the HQ that “Zvki Brigade had just destroyed two more tanks” and again that “Zvki Brigade had just got another tank. As he kept reporting back, the HQ started wonder where in the world did he get all the other tanks?
- Finally the Syrians wondered the same thing, and figured there must be a whole armored division on the other side of the hill because the IDF tanks just kept popping up from behind all these different hills – so they turned and began to retreat.
- God put the Syrians into confusion. Had they known the truth, they would have known that there were only two IDF tanks in the Golan and that was all that stood between them and the Sea of Galilee and the city of Tiberias, but God put them into confusion.
- Meanwhile back at the Suez. The Egyptians had taken the Bar Lev line fortifications in the first 24 hours. The Egyptian military planners had drawn up a battle plan that called for a 3 day assault.
- Having achieved their goal early, they had no orders on what to do next so they stopped and dug in. What they didn’t know was that there was nothing between them and Tel Aviv except a few battered tanks.
- All of this allowed the Israelis to muster their reserves. Again, God had put Israel’s enemies to confusion.
- This war ended by the way with the Israeli army within 80 miles of Cairo and the Egyptian army being routed, the Israeli army also within 40 miles of Damascus, and both countries completely on the defensive having their major industries and infrastructures destroyed. When the United Nations saw that Israel was about to conquer both nations they began to intervene, suing for peace.

V: 28 Later in Joshua we’ll see how the Hivites, Canaanites, Hittites would be holed up in their fortresses and God would send hornets into their fortresses and start stinging them, driving them out of their fortifications – at which time they were attacked and defeated by the armies of Israel, actually by the God of Israel.

V: 29-30 God would not drive them out too quickly so that things would still be taken care of.

- Often times these pagan inhabitants of the land represent our dealing with the flesh, and how our victory over the flesh is somewhat incremental, a process, one step at a time.

V: 31 Boundries are set. Set larger than most people think.

Slides 1-2-3

V: 32 Going back to the analogy of these pagan nations representing our flesh – we can make no peace with the flesh – it must be ahniliated! Crucified.

- This is also why the Middle East peace process, the road map to peace, the Olso Accords are all of no avail – it is not God's will.

V: 33 If we get too close to these foreign gods, they would be a snare to us.

Historically this is true of Israel.