



Exodus 21-23

7033-Exodus 21-23 CHAPTER 21

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Exodus chapter 21. This whole section begins in the nineteenth chapter when they have come now to Mount Sinai, and Moses ascends up in the mount, and God speaks to Moses and He tells them to go down and speak to the people, reminding them how that God destroyed the Egyptians, and how He brought them on eagles' wings unto Himself, to this place; and that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they would be a special treasure to God above all nations; special privileges, special blessings; that they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And so, Moses came down and gave to the people the word of God, and they responded, "All that God has said, we will do." God had not yet established the conditions for the covenant, but the people were ready to enter into this covenant relationship with God without even hearing the requirements because the blessings that were promised were so tremendous.

And so, Moses came back to God, and said, "The people have responded, and said all that You have said, they will do."

And so, beginning in chapter 20, God gave to Moses that covenant whereby He would enter into a relationship with them, they would be a special treasure to God above every nation, they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation unto God. God began by giving to them the Ten Commandments. And then, in chapter 21, God continues with the laws of the covenant.

Many of these laws we will find do not relate to us. Great! Less to worry about. Some of them will relate to us; but beginning with chapter 21, God is actually addressing the judges.

These are the judgments which you shall set before them.

So there were to be set above the people, or over the people, men who would be judges in the various issues that would arise; and these are general, basic laws that the judges were to follow in their dealing with the situations.

It is interesting that the word for "judges" in the Hebrew is "Elohim," which is the word for God in the plural form. So, judges are actually gods with a small "g," not the capital "G." For as we said, and have declared before, God is not a name. God is a title. There are many gods, the Bible declare that; "the gods of the heathen are many. You shall not worship their gods."

So, every man has a god. You have those like Madelaine Murray O'Haire who deny the existence of the eternal, living God. She said, "I'm an atheist," but, in reality, she has her own god. And every person who even avows to be an atheist has a god that he serves: the master passion of their life, the controlling philosophy or concepts.

And so, the god is that person who controls you, has the control of your destiny. If you have committed a crime, and you come before the court, and you are found guilty, the judge in the pronouncing of the sentence upon you actually can control your future, he has control of your destiny; and thus, he becomes your god.

When we come to the New Testament, and Jesus was disputing with the scribes and Pharisees: and He had made the statement, "Before Abraham was, I AM," a very positive confession of being God, the true and the living - JEHOVAH, they took up stones, and they were going to stone Him. And He said, "Hey, I've done a lot of wonderful works among you; opened blind eyes, and healed the lame, and so forth; for which of these works are you stoning Me?" And they said, "We're not stoning You for Your works, but we are stoning you because you, being a man, are constantly claiming to be God." He said, "Did not I say in the law that you were gods?" And He is referring to the law where the judges, who had control over people's destiny, were referred to as *Elohim*, "the gods."

And so, it is unfortunate that the Mormons have taken this particular statement of Jesus, and developed from it this elaborate concept that if you are a faithful Mormon, have your marriage sealed in the temple, wear your proper underwear, that one day you and your wife can go to some planet there in the universe, and you can populate that planet, and you will be god. You and your wife will be the god over that planet, and you'll be able to oversee its development, and all; and they've developed that whole system of thought on the one verse of Jesus where He said, "Did not I say in the law that ye were gods?" But this was a reference just to the judges; not saying that we're going to be elevated to a god state sometime in the future. God knows I don't even want that, I wouldn't want the responsibility of it. I'm hoping for something better in the eternal future than having to look over a bunch of people.

So these are the judgments, and so, He's really addressing this now to those men who would be appointed as judge, *which you shall set before them.*

And the first of the series of laws here revolve around slavery. And again, as I say, some of these things have no application to us in this day, and so, they are just interesting.

Slavery was something that was practiced. The whole Hebrew nation were slaves, bond slaves in Egypt. Slavery was a common practice. Even among the Israelis there was the practice of slavery. The Bible does not really condone slavery; in fact, Moses put definite prohibitions upon slavery, to the extent that in time, it could be abolished.

So, the first restriction;

If you bought a Hebrew servant, he can only serve for six years; in the seventh year he shall go out free.

Now, in Deuteronomy it is added that when you send him out, you've got to give him some animals, you've got to give him some food, and some money, and all, so that he just doesn't go out destitute. So, a man could only be a slave for a six year period; the seventh year, he had to be set free.

This is an interesting law in light of the total history of man. Adam sold man into the bondage of sin, slavery, just about six thousand years ago. It is estimated that Adam's fall took place in about the year 4004 B.C. We are coming close to the two-thousandth year A.D., and man can only be a slave for six years, and the seventh year, he has to be set free. I believe that we are approaching that glorious day when God is going to establish His eternal kingdom, and man will be set free from the slavery and the bondage of sin, and we will live in a world that is filled with peace, and righteousness will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. I believe that man's time of bondage to sin is about over, and I am excited as we approach the beginning of the seven thousandth year of man's history from the time of Adam. I believe that God will carry the pattern through on a universal scale, even as He did in Israel. Six years you serve, the seventh year, you go free.

Now, if he came in by himself, he goes out by himself; if he was married and brought a wife in with him, she goes out with him. But if while serving his master, his master gave to him a wife and they had children, the wife and the children do not go out with him; he has to go out by himself.

But, there were cases where a servant would say, in verse 5,

I love my master and my wife and my children; I don't want to be free; then his master will bring him to the judges, the "Elohim," the gods, and he shall also bring him to the door,

He's to go get the judges, they bring him to his house, and then he takes an awl, and he bores a hole in his ear, and he pins the servant to the doorpost of his house with that awl. He's pinned there to the door post. And, of course, they would then put a gold ring in the ear lobe, and the pierced ear was the sign that he was a servant by choice. And so, "I love my master. I don't want to be free, I want to serve him," he would then be pierced, and that was irrevocable. He remained then a servant for life.

There is an interesting prophecy in Isaiah concerning Jesus Christ; and Jesus declares, prophetically, "My ear have You opened." That is, He willingly submitted Himself unto the Father, as He said, "I did not come to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me." And so, He willingly submitted Himself to the will of the Father, even as was reflected in His prayer in the garden when He said, "Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but Thy will be done." "Mine ear," Isaiah - prophetically - concerning the cross, said, "Mine ear hast Thou opened." God brought Him to the doorpost, pierced His ear. He was a servant by choice as He submitted to the will of the Father in going to the cross for you and for me.

Now, if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the other menservants do.

In other words, she doesn't get to go out in the seventh year. The fathers had the rights to sell their daughters. Usually, of course, they sold them either to be the wife of a man, or to be a part of his concubine. And so, if he sold his daughter, there was always that dowry that was involved. Some young man wants to marry your daughter, his parents come, and you establish a price: a dowry. This was to protect the women in a day in which women did not have any rights.

The women had no right of divorce. They were considered in a category slightly above a slave; and because the women had no rights a man could at his own whim, at any time, get rid of her. All he had to do is write on a piece of paper, "I divorce you," and hand it to her, and she had to go out. It was all over for her. So, to protect her, this dowry concept was established.

Dowry was nothing more than alimony in advance. While the guy is anxious to marry her, deeply in love, professing to have this deep love for her, all excited, wanting to marry her, the dad would say, "OK, you want to marry her, it's going to cost you 5,000 bucks." And in case in time to come, you say, "Ah, I never did love her; get out of here. I write you a bill of divorcement," then she's got her alimony already set and she can go back to her father's house, and it was the duty of the father to invest that money so that if she did come home, she has plenty to live on.

So, the whole idea was alimony in advance to protect the women who did not have protection under the law, or rights under the law.

So, the daughters were usually sold, either to be the wife of a man, or to be a maidservant, which would include part of his concubine.

If she does not please her master,

The guy has bought her, and is betrothed to her, but during this period he decides he doesn't want her,

then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no right to sell her to foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her.

So, he's purchased her, and now he decides he doesn't want to marry her, then some other man can purchase her. Let her be redeemed, he cannot sell her to a stranger or foreigner. Or he can give her to his son.

If he has betrothed her to his son, he will deal with her, she shall be to him as a daughter. And if he takes, he's betrothed her to himself, and he takes another wife; he will not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marriage rights.

She shall have all the rights of the new wife. She remains with full rights. She can go down and buy her clothes, and the food and everything. They can't diminish them.

And if he doesn't do these thing, if he fails in these, then she goes out free, According to the eleventh verse, without paying anything.

Now come the laws concerning violence.

If you strike a man, and he dies, you will surely be put to death. Capital punishment. But if you weren't lying in wait, but God put him into his hand; then I will appoint you a place where you can flee.

If it's manslaughter, you weren't premeditating the act of murder, but it was a thing that just happened, then they would have six cities of refuge where you could flee; and as long as you remained in that city, you were safe from what they called "the avenger of blood." We'll learn more about this as we go along.

But if a man acts in premeditation, or premeditated murder, against his neighbor, to kill him with guile; you shall take him even from the altar of God, that he may die.

In other words, there's no place of refuge for a person who has committed premeditated murder. He is to be taken even from the altar of God.

You remember when Solomon took over the kingdom from David, Joab was David's general, but he actually became sort of a bane to David; and Joab was the one who killed David's son, Absalom, though David had commanded, "Deal kindly with my son, Joab." But Joab thrust him through with the dart. David did not take revenge against Joab himself, but when he was turning the kingdom over to his son, Solomon, he said, "Remember what Joab has done, and don't let him go unpunished."

So, when Solomon became king and Joab heard of it, Joab went into the temple, and he grabbed hold of the horns of the altar, but Solomon ordered them to go in and to drag him away, and to put him to death.

And so, those that were guilty of premeditated murder, there was no place of refuge for them. They were to be put to death.

Now, this sounds pretty heavy;

He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

And so, if a child was guilty of cursing his parents, that was a capital crime.

If two men are fighting, and one hits the other with a stone, or with his fist, and he does not die, but has to be hospitalized; if he rises again, and walks outside with a cane, the one who struck him shall be acquitted, but he shall pay for his loss of time, and provide for him until he is thoroughly healed. If a man beats his servant, or his maidservant with a rod so that he dies under his hand; he will surely be punished, But not capital punishment. For he is the man's property. Under the Roman law you could kill your servant with no punishment. Here, you were to pay a fine. Notwithstanding, if he stays alive for a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property. You weren't intending to kill him. If and man fights with a woman who is pregnant, and causes a miscarriage, and no lasting harm comes to the women; then he shall surely be punished, according to what the woman's husband imposes on him; and the judges agree.

In other words, they come to the judges and the husband says, "I want so much money," and if the judges agree, that's how much he has to pay.

If any lasting harm follows, then you shall give life for life, an eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Now, when we come to the New Testament, Jesus said, "Ye had heard how it hath been said of those of old time, 'An eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth,'" he said, "but I say unto you, forgive. Don't exact it, be merciful." And so, Jesus sort of softens, definitely softens these things, because of the way that they had begun to interpret it. They had begun to interpret this as a command. You had to do eye for eye, you had to do a tooth for a tooth, they gave no place for mercy or forgiveness.

Now if a man strikes the eye of his servant, so that he loses his sight, then the person goes free because of the loss of the sight of an eye. And if he knocks out one of his teeth; he can go free, because of the loss of the tooth.

And, of course, the eye was considered the most important thing, a tooth, not that important. So, anything in between, if a servant is injured in a permanent way by his master, he goes free because of the injury.

Then there were animal control laws;

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death; the ox will surely be stoned, but it's flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox will be acquitted. However, if the ox in times past was known to be sort of vicious, push with his horns, then the owner of the ox is responsible; he has not kept it confined; and the ox shall be stoned, and the owner also, because he did not keep it confined. But he could pay a price and redeem himself from being stoned, if he would pay the price imposed upon him. So he could be heavily fined, or put to death. Whether he has gored a son, or gored a daughter, according to the judgment it shall be done to him. Now if the ox gores a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Interesting, the price of a gored slave was thirty pieces of silver. Jeremiah, prophetic concerning Jesus Christ said, "And price for me the price that you will. And they priced for me thirty pieces of silver." And it said, "Cast it to the potter." And in the New Testament we read that Judas Iscariot went to the priest and he

conspired to betray Jesus for what? Thirty pieces of silver, the price of a gored slave. He said, "Price the price that you would price for me, a goodly price, thirty pieces of silver." So, it's very interesting. It makes the crime of Judas all the more heinous.

Now if a man opens a pit,

Now, their water was usually kept in cisterns. They would dig these large caves into the rocks, and they would divert the flow of water into the caves, and these cisterns were their reservoirs. And they would usually cover over the top with a stone, or with planks. And so, when you would go to get the water out of the cistern, let the bucket down in to get your water, you would pull the planks back, and let the bucket in. Now, if you didn't pull the planks over the top again, left the open pit, and an ox or a donkey would fall into it,

The owner of the pit shall make it good. He shall give money to their owner, but he gets the dead beast.

Now, if it's an ox: 'all right, you can have steak;' but if it's a donkey, your out of luck.

If one man's ox hurts another man's ox so that it dies; then they shall sell the live ox, and split the money. However, if that ox was known to be an aggressive ox, and, you know, always going around goring with his horn, and the owner has not confined it; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead beast shall be his own.

So, he would have to pay for the ox. Otherwise, they just sell the ox and split the money; but in this case, he has to pay for it.

CHAPTER 22

Now if a man steals an ox, or a sheep, and slaughters it, or sells it; rustlers; he shall restore five oxen for an ox,

So, you have to restore fivefold for stealing an ox, and if you steal a sheep, you have to restore fourfold:

Four sheep for a sheep. If a thief is caught breaking into the house at night, and you kill him,

It is justifiable homicide, no guilt upon the man who killed the thief breaking in at night. However, if it's during the day, then there would be guilt if you killed him,

But the thief has to make full restitution, and if he doesn't have anything, then he is to be sold as a slave for his theft. If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it's an ox, or a donkey, or a sheep; he shall restore double. If a man causes a field or a vineyard to be grazed, and he let's loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field; he's going to have to make restitution of the best of his own crops.

Or, the best of his own vineyard.

If a fire breaks out, and it is carried by the wind into the other man's field, and burns his field, then the person that kindled the fire has to make restitution. If a man delivers something to you for you to keep; your safe-keeping, articles or money; and it is stolen out of the man's house; if the thief is found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought

to the judges, to see whether he has put his hand to his neighbor's goods.

He's to be brought before the judges. You say, "Well, someone stole it." Well, you're brought before the judges and they determine whether or not you're telling the truth.

For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, donkey, or sheep, or clothing, for any kind of lost thing, which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges, or gods, and whomever the judges condemn, shall pay double to his neighbor. If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep; and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it; then he has to take an oath of the LORD that he has not put his hand to his neighbor's good; and the owner of it shall accept that, and he shall not make it good. But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it.

Boy, I'll tell you, I sure wouldn't want anybody to loan me anything, or say, "Keep my donkey, or my dog," or anything else, because you're responsible for it. Pretty heavy duty.

If it is torn to pieces by an animal, then he shall bring it as evidence, you bring the carcass of the little lamb that's been torn to pieces by the wolf, and you don't have to make it good. But if the owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired,

Now, this is the law of borrowing, verse 14,

If a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured, or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good.

If you borrow an ox from your neighbor to plow with, and while you're plowing with that ox, it keels over and dies, then you've got to pay your neighbor for the ox. If your neighbor came with it, and he's plowing with you, then you don't have to pay anything. Or, if you hired it, if you rented it from him, then you didn't have to make restitution.

If a man entices a virgin who is not engaged, betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride price for her to be his wife. He's going to have to pay the dowry. If her father says, "Hey, I don't want you as a son-in-law," and refuses to give him to her, he's still going to have to pay the dowry according to the bride price of virgins.

So, the guy is stuck; if he seduced a gal, he has to hope that her dad will have mercy and let him have her, otherwise, he has to pay for her and still doesn't get her.

You shall not permit a sorceress to live. And so, witchcraft was a capital crime. Whoever lies with a beast shall surely be put to death.

Bestiality: capital crime. Now, I have pointed out in the past that often times we look at the law of God in the wrong way. We think that God is awesome in judgment. You know, "Ah man, this is terrible. Capital punishment; that's horrible." In many cases, as we look at the law of God, the law of God was intended for the preservation of society and for the benefit of man. These laws that God established were for man's good. They are not just arbitrary things of God, and God just saying, "Well, don't do this, don't do that, and don't do the other," and all; but God has a reason behind the declaration of the law: the preservation of the family, the sanctity of human life, sanctity of womanhood. And when God here is declaring that they shall be put to death, He is only often times declaring what will be the inevitable consequences of such actions.

As so much research is being done concerning AIDS, the best that they have come to, as far as an understanding of it's origin, where did AIDS get started; the latest research concerning AIDS shows that it came from some man having sexual relationships with a monkey in Africa. It came from bestiality. Now, under the law, that man would have been put to death and you wouldn't be faced today with this horrible dilemma of "what are we going to do about AIDS?" It seems like an awful thing to say, "Put the man to death," but God knows that bestiality can bring into the human strain diseases that we can't cope with.

This thing is about to explode, this whole AIDS thing. From 1979 until the present time here in the United States, there have been 16,000 reported cases of AIDS, of which, over half of those people have already died. The health center of the United States estimates that in the year 1986, there will be 16,000 new cases of AIDS, as many new cases this year alone, as we've had during the entire history of the plague since 1979.

They estimate that 50% of the practicing homosexuals in San Francisco presently are carrying the AIDS virus. You carry it in your system for a period of six months up to five years before it breaks out. It can be carried in your system. The incubation period is a long period of time, six months up to five years; but it will ultimately break out.

So, though there have only been 300 cases of death by AIDS in Germany up to this point, 1986, they estimate that in Germany alone, there will be in the next five years 100,000 cases of AIDS. But that's how many people are presently carrying the virus in their bodies.

And again, when you think that they trace it back to a monkey in Africa, and a man having sexual relationship with that monkey, under the law here, verse 19, he would have been put to death, and the world would not be faced with the plague that it is presently faced with.

He who sacrifices to any god except JEHOVAH only, shall be utterly destroyed. No false worship of other gods. You shall neither mistreat a stranger, nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. So, God's looking over the strangers; and then, also the widow and the fatherless child, the orphan. You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.

God takes the cause of the underdog. A stranger or a foreigner was always an underdog in that time of history; and also widows and orphans, but God takes their cause.

If you afflict them in any way, and they cry to Me, I will surely hear their cry, I take up their cause; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives will then be widows, and your children fatherless.

So, God's pretty severe in His defense of the widows and the fatherless. "If they cry to Me because of your oppression, I'll wipe you out, and your own wife and your children will experience widowhood and being fatherless."

If you lend money to any of my people who are poor among you, you shall not be like the money lender, but you shall not charge him interest. So, loaning to the poor could not be with interest. If you take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, If he says, "Loan me some money, and I'll give you my garment as a pledge; and I'll give you the money back soon," you shall return the garment to him before the sun goes down; for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin; what will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear; for I am gracious.

He gets cold in the night, he doesn't have his coat around him and he starts crying, "Oh, I'm shivering, God. I'm cold." God said, "I'll hear him. I'm gracious."

You shall not revile God, nor curse the ruler of your people. You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce, and your juices, the firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. So, God requires the first; the first fruits. Likewise, you shall do with your oxen, and your sheep; it shall be with it's mother for seven days, on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

That is, the first born of oxen and sheep. They belong to God. Stay with the mother for seven days. On the eighth day, you give them to the Lord.

And you shall be holy men to me; you shall not eat any meat which is torn by the beasts of the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

CHAPTER 23

You shall not circulate a false report; do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; you shall not testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. God wants honesty; whether the guy is poor or not, honest judgment. If you meet your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under it's burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

Just because the guy is your enemy, or you hate him, you're to be kind to the animal. The animal can't be responsible for the evil of the master. And God here, really, again, speaking to protect the animal. They're His creation. God is interested in all of His creation. He's interested that we have a kindness and a tenderness towards animals.

You shall not pervert the judgment of the poor in his dispute. Now keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous; for I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe; for a bribe blinds the discerning, and perverts the words of the righteous. Also, you shall not oppress a stranger; for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Now the laws concerning the Sabbaths:

Six years you shall sow your land, and gather it's produce; but the seventh year, let the land rest and lie fallow; that the poor of the people may eat of it; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard, and your olive grove.

Six years you harvest it; the seventh year, you just let it go for the poor of the land. You don't plant. Whatever grows up by itself from the seed that's been in the ground, the poor have the right to come in and eat it. What they don't eat, the animals can eat.

Now, when the children of Israel came into the promised land, this is one of the laws of God that they did not obey. They did not keep the Sabbath year as far as the land, but they planted every year. So that, at the time of Jeremiah, after they had been in the land for 490 years, Jeremiah prophesied their captivity in Babylon: "Babylon is going to come, they're going to destroy you, they're going to carry you away as captives. And you will be captives," Jeremiah said, "for seventy years because you did not obey the Sabbaths."

Being there for 490 years, planting every year for 490 years, not giving the land the rest, or the Sabbath, God said, "I will give the land it's Sabbaths. You didn't do it. You disobeyed Me. Therefore, I'll keep you out of the land for seventy years, that the land may have it's Sabbaths." God will exact His toll sooner or later. God will get His due. And so, God allowed them to be captives in Babylon for seventy years, to make up for the seventy years that they planted the land when it should have laid fallow.

Six days you shall do your work, on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may rest, and your son and maidservant, and the stranger may be refreshed. Everybody takes the Sabbath off. Everybody gets to rest. And in all that I have said to you be circumspect, be careful in these things; and do not make mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth. Now there are three times that you are to hold a feast and appear before the LORD. The feast of unleavened bread; (you shall eat the unleavened bread for seven days, as I command you, in the time appointed in the month of Abib, which is, of course the feast of the Passover; for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before me empty).

In other words, come with an offering. In the feast of harvest, which was fifty days after the feast of the Passover; the feast of harvest, which was the harvest of the winter grains, when they would harvest the barley and the wheat, and so forth, the winter grains, which are harvested in the first part of June; fifty days after the feast of the Passover, they are to come with the first fruits of their harvest of grain to offer them to the Lord at the feast of Pentecost. And then they would have a feast of harvest, which took place in the tenth month of the year, also known as *Succoth*, or the Feast of the Tabernacles. And these are the three feasts in which they were to present themselves to God. They gather, then, the fruit of their labors, the harvest of the fruit; the grapes, and so forth, are harvested in that portion of the year.

Three times in the year, all of your males shall appear before the Lord GOD; and you shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in it's mother's milk.

So, God demanding the first of the first fruits. God really asks for your best, and there's nothing wrong with that. Surely, He is deserving. Anything I have, He has given to me on sort of a loan basis, so it really all belongs to Him.

Now, this scripture, *you shall not boil a young goat in it's mother's milk*, I suppose it's sort of a humanitarian kind of a thing. You know, if you're going to have goat meat, you're not to boil the meat in it's mother's milk.

However, the Jews have carried this quite a bit further and have interpreted this, ultimately, as they develop - and on, and on, and on, - you know, -- what constitutes boiling in it's mother's milk? They determine that if you ate this little goat, and at the same time as you were eating the meat of the goat, you drank a glass of goat's milk: in your stomach, the acids and all would sort of boil that meat in the mother's milk. Therefore, you should not drink milk when you eat meat. But if you ate cheese, cheese coming from milk, it may have been the milk from the goat of the mother of that little kid that you ate, and so, you shouldn't eat cheese either because it would be mixing in your stomach, and you'd be boiling the little kid in it's mother's milk.

And so, they kept adding and adding and figuring out ways by which this law could be violated, and so they have, and keep until the present day, this business of no meat or dairy products. They've gone so far now. Dairy products cannot be consumed with meat at any meal, except for fish. But even turkey, they

won't eat turkey with milk, and I've never seen anybody milk a turkey yet; but, they have these interesting laws concerning the eating of meat. And it's interesting, even non-believing Jews, for the most part, keep this.

Now, this is the covenant. Now, a lot of the things that we read seem rather irrelevant to us tonight. But basically, through it all, God is affirming the fact that He wants there to be a parity, He wants an equality, He wants a righteousness of actions; not only towards men, but towards animals. The laws by which we are to live if we are to walk with God.

And now God gives to them a series of promises and a series of warnings, and then He declares the principles by which they are to come in, and to conquer the land.

So you have now, basically, the covenant of God declared. Now He adds sort of an addendum to it, which are extra promises, and extra warnings 'concerning what I have said. Now, this is the law, this is the covenant; if you're going to be my special treasure, if you're going to be a holy nation, if you're going to be a royal priesthood, this is how you must live before Me.'

Now, He said,

Behold, I will send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

The angel, first of all, note, is to go before you. 'He is to keep you, and He will bring you into the place that I have prepared.' This angel is to have the name of JEHOVAH in Him. Verse 21,

Beware of him, obey his voice, do not provoke him; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in him.

Thus, He is the angel of JEHOVAH. And throughout the Old Testament, you read often of the angel of the LORD. Notice the LORD is in all capitals. The LORD, all capitals, signifies that it is a translation of the Hebrew tetragramitron which cannot be pronounced. It's the consonants that were used for the name of God, the YHWH; thought to be pronounced either Ya-ho-vah, or Yah-weh, and the actual pronunciation is not really known. Commonly it's Ya-ho-vah, but, probably more scholarly, it was Yah-weh.

The angel of Yahweh, or the angel of Jehovah, the angel of the LORD, is none other than Jesus Christ. The angel of the LORD appeared to Abraham. The angel of the LORD wrestled with Jacob all night. These were manifestations of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, which got them all shook, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it. Abraham saw Me." They said, "Are you kidding? Who are you trying to kid? You're not even fifty years old. What do you mean, Abraham saw you?" And Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." That's when they took up the stones to kill him. So, the angel of the LORD, Jesus Christ, was the one that was going to go before them.

Now the LORD said, "Beware of him, obey His voice, do not provoke Him, He will not pardon your transgressions." Their transgressions were to be punished, and their transgressions were punished. And there were times when, in the wilderness, God began to smite the people. He sent the serpents into the camp and the people began to die as the result of the bites of the serpents. Again, in the wilderness, when they were drawn by the gals of Edom to worship their gods, the angel of the LORD began to smite them, and twenty-two thousand were killed in one day.

Now, the LORD said,

Beware of Him. Obey His voice. He will not pardon your transgressions, for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries.

“I’ll enter into a mutual defense pact with you. I will defend you. Whoever comes against you is coming against Me. I’ll stand behind you. I will be an enemy to your enemies, an adversary to your adversaries.” What a glorious thing to have God join together with me in a mutual defense pact. Not much I can do for Him, but oh, He can do so much for me.

But notice, it’s conditional. “Obey My voice, and do all that I speak.”

For My Angel will go before you, and bring you into the Amorites, the Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites; and I will cut them off. So, God is telling what He’s going to do. The angel of the LORD will bring you in, and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, the warning, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them, and completely break down their idols; pillars, sacred pillars.

So, you’re not to follow after the method of worship, the practices, you’re not to bow down to their gods, you’re not to serve them, or do according to their works. You’re not to follow their forms of worship.

Today, many churches have forms of worship that come right out of pagan religions. Many of them have forms of worship that are borrowed from ancient Babylon. And God says, “I don’t want you to worship Me as they do. Don’t copy their forms.” Jesus said, “God is a spirit: they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

I think that there is a real inherent danger in any kind of ritualized worship of God. I think that the worship of God ought to be the most natural thing in the world: spontaneous. And surely we don’t need a church to worship in. Worship God when you’re walking down the street, when you’re driving your car. Whenever God’s Spirit gives the impulse to your heart, worship. You don’t have to say, “Oh, I want to worship God. Run to the church so I can worship God. Kneel before the altar so I can worship God.”

I had a fellow here one time after service who was just totally incensed. Some friends had brought him to the church. Some of his family had brought him to the church. And he was red-faced, and he was shaking when he talked to me at the door. He said, “Why didn’t you face the altar when you prayed?” I said, “Well, I guess, because I don’t think God dwells in the altar.” But, I mean, it was a form of worship, and man, he was really shook because I didn’t turn around and face the altar. That really isn’t an altar, but I guess he thought it was.

But I mean, you can get so hung up; you know, “unless you’re in the right position, you can’t be praying.” I remember when I was a kid, I used to think that the only way you could really pray was head bowed, eyes closed, fold our hands, because that’s what the Sunday School teacher always said before we prayed. I didn’t realize that she didn’t want us to be distracted by looking around at other kids; ‘fold your hands so you’re not hitting them,’ you know. It was wise on the teacher’s part, but it formed in my mind sort of an idea that you weren’t really praying unless your eyes were closed.

And so, one day I was riding my bike down the street, I wanted to pray, and I closed my eyes and ran into a car. Then I wondered, “Man, God, why would You let me run into a car when I’m praying?”

But we get into these little routines. We think that, "Oh, I've got to be in church," or "I've got to be here," or "It doesn't really count if your eyes aren't closed." And I heard some fellows who were arguing over what was the proper position for prayer. One guy says, "Well, you know, sitting is the proper position," and the other guy says, "No, lying, you've got to lie on the ground to pray." Another guy says, "No, you've got to kneel;" and they were arguing what the proper position was. 'If you're not kneeling, God doesn't hear you; if you're not lying down, God doesn't pay any attention.' And they were going through the whole routine, and this one fellow, finally, listening to them all, got disgusted; he said, "Hey, man, if any of you fall head first down a well, you'd be in real trouble."

It's not really the position of my body, it's the position of my heart that God looks upon. Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. It's not a physical position.

And so, "don't follow the other gods. Don't bow to them. Don't serve them. Don't do according to their rituals, but overthrow them."

You shall serve JEHOVAH your God, and He will bless your bread, and your water;

Serving God, He'll bless you. He'll bless your bread and water. That is, He will bring to you prosperity, material prosperity. Also, He will bring to you physical prosperity.

He will take away your sickness from the midst of you. There won't be miscarriages, there won't be a barrenness in the land; and I will fulfill the number of your days.

That is, you'll live to be a ripe old age. Now, as David wrote the first Psalm, he no doubt was thinking of this passage when he talked about the blessed man who meditated in the law of the Lord day and night. "Be like a tree planted by the river of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither." A poetic way of saying you're going to have a long, healthy life. And then he declared, "Whosoever does this will prosper." Who? The man who meditates day and night in the law of the Lord.

Now, interestingly enough, though it may have seemed rather boring to you as we went through, the law of the Lord that David is referring to is Exodus chapters 20-23. These are the passages that God would have a man meditating in day and night; that you might know how God would have you to treat your neighbor, to treat your animals, to treat those around you. This is how God wants you to live. And if you will serve the Lord, then the Lord will bless your bread and your water. He will bring to you health and long life.

And I will set my fear before you, God said, and I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and I will make all your enemies to turn their backs to you.

So, several promises here: "I'll send my fear before you," that is, the people would become frightened; "I will cause confusion among them:" the enemies; and also, "I'll cause them to turn their backs to you."

In 1973, when Syria and Egypt launched what was code titled "The War of Annihilation," they were planning to annihilate Israel, and almost did. When they began their attack against Israel, they had initial successes that were phenomenal. The Israelis had built down in the Suez Canal area what they called the barlev line, after General Lev. It was suppose to be, sort of, their marginal line of the French; you know, sort of an impenetrable kind of defense. And they figured that they could hold out with this line of defense along the Suez. However, the Egyptians overran the barlev defenses in 24 hours.

Up in the Golan Heights when Syria attacked with eight thousand tanks, 800 more than Hitler had when he

started his war against Russia, all in just a little, narrow, twenty mile area, these tanks finally overran the Israeli lines, and they were moving along the Golan, and they came within a half-mile of the Golan headquarters, when, without explanation, they stopped their advance. To the present day, they are not sure why Syria stopped. At the time they stopped their advance, a half-mile from the Golan headquarters, Israel had only two operational tanks, and the tank brigade that was coming to the Golan headquarters. There were over 100 tanks, plus armored personnel carriers. Only two tanks to defend against them.

Zvki, a young Israeli lieutenant, hitch-hiked up to the Golan headquarters and said, "I'm a tank commander. Do you have any tanks?" He said, "We have one. Wait a half-hour, we'll get a second." He helped unload the dead bodies out of the one tank, refueled the thing, and he took off with the two tanks to face the Syrians; and he turned the corner, and just a half-mile away, here's the whole armored brigade. He ordered the tanks to start firing, and then he noticed that his tank was the only one firing, so he popped the hatch and looked, and he saw that the other tank was already knocked out of commission. He thought, "This is no place for me," so he headed over the hill.

And then he took his tank -- there's a series of hills there, and he began to race up and down along what is known as the tap line road; coming up over a hill, popping a couple Syrians tanks, banking down, racing to another hill, coming over the top, popping a couple more tanks, banking down, and racing back and forth behind the hills: coming up over the top and wiping out Syrian tanks when he came over the top. He was reporting back to the Golan headquarters, "The Zvki brigade just destroyed two more tanks," and, "Zvki brigade just got another tank," and kept reporting about the Zvki brigade out there; he was the only one. Back in the Golan, they thought, "Where in the world did he pick up the rest of the tanks?"

Finally, the Syrians figured there must be a whole armored division on the other side of the hill because he kept popping up over different hills. And they turned, and began to retreat. God put them to confusion. Had the Syrians known, they could have come right down to the Sea of Galilee and taken Tiberias. The two tanks in the Golan Headquarters were the only things that stood between them and taking Tiberias. But God put them to confusion.

Down on the Suez, where the Egyptians had taken the barlev line, where they had crossed the fortresses there; they had planned in their strategy a three day assault against the barlev line. They took it within 24 hours. They were so surprised, they didn't have any further orders at the present time. So they just sort of started to dig in, and that's when the Israelis were then able to muster their reserves, and they began to move against their entrenched positions. What they didn't know is that there were only ninety battered tanks between them and Tel Aviv. Had they continued their movement, they could have come right on up to Tel Aviv, facing only ninety battered tanks.

But God put them to confusion; as God said, "I will confuse your enemies. Those that are against you, I'll confuse them." And He does to the present day.

Then God said, 'I will use nature to fight for you.'

I will send the hornets before you, which will drive out the Hivite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.

Their hold up in their fortresses, 'I'll just send in a bunch of hornets to start stinging them, and driving them out. And then, as they come out running, you can throw your javelins, and shoot your arrows, and get them.' Using nature to fight.

And we remember Joshua, as he was fighting against the federation of five kings that had come against

Gibeon because they had made a league with Israel, in the evening when the enemy had not been totally wiped out, and he needed more time to complete the battle, he said, "Sun, stand still," and the sun stood still; and did not set for the space of 24 hours. "No other day like it in history," the Scripture says. You say, "Aaaaaah, do you really believe that the sun actually stood still, the moon stood still over the valley of Aijalon. You actually believe that the moon and the sun just hung there in their positions?" Yes, I believe it. Because the Bible says it. "Yeah, well I have a hard time with that." Well, how about history? Do you believe history?

If you want some verification on this, get the book, "World's in Collision," by Emmanuel Vilikovsky. A scientist; as far as I know, not a believer at all. He has a book in which he has a hypothesis of the introduction of the planet Venus into our solar system during the time of our recorded history; in fact, during this particular period of time. And in this book, he deals with the historic veracity of the long day of Joshua.

Now, he takes the premise that if it were a long day on that side of the world, it would be a long night on this side of the world. And he takes - in China or India - it would be a long period of time before the sun came up because, of course, the sun is setting in the west, and so it would be a long period of time. Anyhow, he traces this around the history of the various nations of the world, and he proves that each record in history, if it be in China, or if it be over here in the Mayan records, that it would correspond with the long night over there, and he proves it. And he shows in every one of the records; he quotes from them how they have either long evenings, long afternoons, long nights, or whatever, that correspond to the long day of Joshua that is recorded in the annals of history around the world. So, if you don't want to believe the Bible, then I trust you believe history; but I feel sorry for you if you would believe history before you believe the Bible.

So, 'I will use nature.' Now, God tells him, *I'm not going to drive them out from before you in one year; It's not going to be an immediate victory, instant victory, instant conquest. Lest the land become desolate, the beast of the field become too numerous for you. But little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.*

Now, here are the principles of conquest of the land of Canaan, but in a spiritual sense; Israel's history being typical history, their bondage in Egypt is spiritually likened to our old life in sin, the bondage of sin in which we once were held. Their deliverance out of Egypt is spiritually significant to our being set free from the power of sin through Jesus Christ; being born again. Their wilderness experiences have their spiritual sequel in the developing of our walk with the Lord as we come toward these promises of God.

Their crossing over Jordan has its spiritual sequel in our coming to the place where we finally reckon our old nature to be dead, that we might live now a new life after the Spirit. Subsequent to our conversion, as God is drawing us to Himself, I've finally realized this life of the flesh has to go. If I'm really going to live in full fellowship with God, I cannot be living after the flesh; and I come to the Jordan, and I reckon there my old life to be dead. I want to live a new life, I want to walk after the Spirit and live after the Spirit, and so, I reckon the old nature to be dead, and I cross over Jordan, and I come into the new land.

Now, here's where our hymnology has made an error, because so often in hymnology, Jordan is likened unto physical death so that we sing, "Swing low, sweet chariot, coming forth to carry me home. Then I looked over Jordan, what did I see, band of angels coming after me, coming forth to carry me home. Swing low sweet chariot." Or we sing, "I won't have to cross Jordan alone; Jesus died, my sins to atone," and so forth. "Through the dark I see, He's waiting for me. I'm not going to have cross Jordan alone." And Jordan is used in hymnology to symbolize physical death. Wrong.

It's that reckoning of my old nature, my old life to be dead; because you see, if Canaan land was a type

of heaven, you've got some problems. Because the first thing they did when they came into Canaan was they had some battles; and they had a lot of battles in Canaan. You're not going to have any battles when you get to heaven. It's all over. They had some failures. You're not going to have any failure when you get to heaven. That'll all be over.

So, this symbology is the death of the old nature, but now entering into the fullness of that life after the Spirit where I am now dealing with the things of the flesh, and I am now beginning to conquer over the flesh life. But the flesh life is deeply entrenched. The flesh life; there are giants in the land. They are too great for me to handle, and thus, I need God's principles if I'm going to live after the Spirit, walk after the Spirit, and see the old flesh crucified.

God doesn't do it instantly. Unfortunately, there are those who are promising instant deliverance from the flesh. And you can go, and they'll lay their hands on you, and they'll cast out that demon of lust, or they'll cast out that demon of gluttony, or that demon of temper, or that demon of something else; and they say, "Hey, you can have instant victory. You don't have to take it little by little. We can just come and work over you for an hour or two, and we can get rid of all of the hundreds of demons that are possessing you, and you can go out Super-Saints."

Doesn't happen. God said it's not going to happen in a year. You wouldn't be able to handle it; but just little by little. And God knows that I couldn't handle it. If He showed me all of my problems of the flesh when I first began this walk, I would have been wiped out. I thought I was pretty good, but then He showed me an area that really needed correcting. And little by little, when God took care of that area, then He showed me another area. I didn't see the other area until the first area was taken care of, and I'm thankful for that. And then when He took care of that area, then He showed me another area. And little by little, God is bringing me into the walk of the Spirit; and I love the way that God works in my life.

Now notice, God said, "I will drive them out;" and that's the mistake that I often make because I try to get victory over my flesh myself. God shows me the area of the flesh that needs working on. I say, "Oh, Lord, that horrible. I didn't realize I was doing that. God, I don't know how I could have been doing that. That's horrible, that's ugly, God. I'll get rid of that immediately. I won't do that again." Hey, but I do it. I find myself doing it, until finally, I cry out in despair, "Oh, God, I can't do it. Help me, Lord." And then the Lord sets me free and delivers me. He drives out the enemy for me little by little.

And so, I gain; and so, I grow; and so, I develop in my walk with the Lord as I begin to inherit this glorious life in the Spirit. I begin to enjoy the blessings, and the victories, and the joys of walking with the Lord in the Spirit; the promised land, that promised life, that exceeding rich and abundant life in Christ.

Little by little, I'll drive them out until you inherit the land. I'll set your boundaries from the Red sea to the sea of the Philistines, from the desert to the river, River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and you shall drive them out from before you.

So, God promised their boundaries, but they never did take all of the land that God had promised. So I do not believe that while we are in this body of flesh, we will ever be totally free from the problems of the flesh. As long as I'm living in this body, I'm going to have problems with this body. The desires of my flesh are going to be with me as long as I live. I thank God I don't have to be obedient to them. I don't have to submit to them.

That's what freedom is all about. It isn't freedom to follow my flesh; and that's a mistake that many people make. "Oh, I'm free in Jesus. I can do anything I want." Oh no, no, no, no. You're free in Jesus. You don't have to do those things anymore. That's the freedom. When you were ruled by your flesh, you

had to do them. The flesh mastered you. You were under it's dominion and control, and so, you did those things because you didn't have any power otherwise. But now, through Jesus, I've been set free from the flesh so that I don't have to do those things anymore, and that's the glorious freedom that I enjoy. I could, but I don't have to. Oh, what a neat position to be in; not to have to do it anymore.

You shall make no covenant with them, or with their gods.

You cannot make a covenant with your flesh. You cannot make a peaceful coexistence pact with your flesh. You can't say, "Well, that's just me. I'm going to have to learn to live with it, and you're going to have learn to live with it; and that's me, and that's just the way I am." No, no, no. Don't make a pact with your flesh. Don't say, "Well, that's just me, I've tried to get rid of it. I know it's ugly. I know it's hateful and nasty and all, but I can't do anything about it. Just have to learn to live with it." Uh, uh, uh, uh; don't make any covenant with the enemy. Don't make a covenant with your flesh. Don't say, "Well, you know, it's pretty nice, you're not too bad. I'll let you stay there. Just don't create too many waves." God said, "Kill it." Kill it. "If we by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live." "Reckon your old man to be crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be" *katargéo*, 'put of business.' Don't coddle your flesh. Don't give place for the flesh. In fact, I think there's a Scripture that says, "Give no place for the flesh, to fulfill the desires thereof." Don't give a place for the flesh. Reckon it to be dead. Make no covenant with it.

They shall not dwell in your land, you're to root them out of the land, lest they make you sin against Me.

You leave an area for you're flesh and I'll tell you, it's going to come back and haunt you. It's going to come back and destroy you. It must be put to death.

For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

It's going to trap you sooner or later if you're trying to live with the flesh and the things of the flesh. We've got to bring it to the cross, reckon it dead, that we might live after the Spirit and inherit all that God has promised for us.

Now, that's the sad thing. God has given many promises to us. The promise of the Spirit filled abundant life that people have not entered into. You've not yet taken it. It's there, but you've got to appropriate it.

As Joshua came into the land, God said, "OK, Joshua, every place you put your foot, I have given it to you." But he had to go around and put his foot down before it was his.

Now, God says basically that to you in your war against the flesh. Every place where you claim God's victory, every place you put your foot and lay claim to it, "All right, God, I claim in Jesus' name victory over this area of the flesh in my life." God said, not, "I will give it to you," but, "I have given it to you." It's already been given. All you have to do is appropriate it by faith, that you can live and walk in that life in the Spirit. A life of victory. A life of fellowship with Jesus. The life that God wants you to live. A life that is blessed. A life that is rich. A life that is flowing with milk and honey. A life of, what I call, the overflowing cup; as David said, "My cup runneth over," and living the life of the overflowing cup. My life is rich. My life overflows.

They used to sing the chorus, "Here's my cup, Lord, I lift it up, - Lord, hear the pleading of my heart. Bread of heaven, feed me until I want no more. Here's my cup, I lift it up." No, I want more than just a full

cup; my cup runneth over. Not just, "Fill my cup, Lord," but, "Let my cup overflow," so that others around me might be blessed; benefited because of the work that You've done in my life.

And, you know, that's often God's purpose: not just to work in you. That's primary, that's go to be; but God is never satisfied when the work in you has been done. He's never satisfied until He is working through you to touch others. And the work of God in you is always to the end, that He might prepare you, that He might work through you, touching others with His love, with His grace, with His goodness.

So, God, fill my cup until it overflows, and You're love flows forth from me like a river of living water to the thirsty world around. Shall we pray.

Father, we look at Your covenant, and though many of the things do not relate particularly to our culture or society, we admire and love Thy law. Those things that do pertain to us, Lord, we recognize that they are good, that this is the way we should live, that this is the right kind of a life. We should have that right relationship with You, where You're first and above everything else. We want it. We want, Lord, to honor and respect You, to serve You above every other God. And, Lord, we want to walk in fellowship with You. We want to be You're special treasure. We want You, Lord, to find value in us. We want to be valuable to You. We want to be, Lord, a royal priesthood. We want to be holy. And so, Lord, as we see this vast territory to be conquered, we thank You that You've promised to go before us; to put to confusion the enemy, to drive them out from before us, and to allow us to inherit the land little by little. And so, Lord, may we see ourselves in that progress of conquering over the flesh. And daily, Lord, bring to us new victories, new strength, the help of Your Spirit that we would no longer live after the flesh to fulfill it's desires, but we would live, Lord, after Your Spirit - in a manner, and in a way, that pleases You. Lord, we submit ourselves to You now, in Jesus' name. Amen.

"In His law does he meditate day and night." This is the law that David was referring to. Good to go back over it and read it again. Good to meditate upon it, because if you will do your part, God will do His part: and you will be like a tree planted by the river of water. You'll bring forth fruit, you're leaf will not wither, and whatever you do will prosper. God will bless and prosper your life. So let's put to practice these things.

May the Lord bless you, keep you in His love, fill you with His Spirit, and cause you to walk in His grace; as we commit our lives; and this year, to becoming God's instruments through which He might reach that needy world around us, as His love overflows from us to touch their lives in Jesus' name.