

# Exodus 23 - The Civil Law; Sabbath of the Land; Jubilee Year

II. Israel's Covenant: Instruction to be redeemed nation (Ex 19:1—40:38)

(2) Covenant text (Ex 20:1—23:33)

(B) Book of the covenant supplementing the Decalogue (Ex 20:22—23:33)

(e) Laws concerning moral and civil obligations (Ex 22:18—23:9)

(f) Laws concerning Sabbaths and feasts (23:10-19)

(g) Laws concerning the conquest (23:20-33)

## Exodus 23

(e) Laws concerning moral and civil obligations (Ex 22:18—23:9) (cont'd from Ex 22)

1 "You shall not give a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked person to be a malicious witness.

1 "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

1 "You are not to spread a false report, nor are you to join forces with the wicked to be a malicious witness.

1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

2 You shall not follow the crowd in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to join together with a crowd in order to pervert *justice*;

2 You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert *justice*;

2 You are not to follow the majority in doing wrong, and you are not to testify in a lawsuit so as to follow the majority and pervert justice.

2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

3 nor shall you show favor to a poor person in his dispute.

3 nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute.

3 You are not to show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

3 Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

4 "If you encounter your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you must return it to him.

4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

4 "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, you are to certainly return it to him.

4 If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying *helpless* under its load, you shall not leave it *helpless* for its owner; you must arrange *the load* with him.

5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying *helpless* under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release *it* with him.

5 If you see your enemy's donkey lying helpless under its load, you must not abandon it; rather, you are certainly to return it to him.

5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

6 "You shall not pervert the justice *due* to your needy *brother* in his dispute.

6 "You shall not pervert the justice *due* to your needy *brother* in his dispute.

6 "You are not to pervert justice for the poor among you in their lawsuits.

6 Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.

7 Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.

7 Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.

7 Stay far away from a false charge, and don't kill the innocent or the righteous, because I won't acquit the guilty.

7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

8 "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

8 "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

8 You are not to take a bribe because a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and distorts the words of the righteous.

8 And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

9 "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you *also* were strangers in the land of Egypt.

9 "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you *also* were strangers in the land of Egypt.

9 You are not to oppress the resident alien, because you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

(f) Laws concerning Sabbaths and feasts (23:10-19)

10 "Now you shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield,

10 "You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield,

10 "You are to sow your land and gather its crops for six years,

10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof:

- Do not confuse this with the Sabbath for man to rest the seventh day. The Sabbath was made for man. There is a different Sabbath, the Sabbath of the land.

11 but *in* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie uncultivated, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the animal of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

11 but *on* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

11 but you are to let it rest the seventh year, leaving it unplanted. The poor of your people may eat from it, and the wild animals may eat what they leave. You are to do the same with your vineyards and olive groves.

11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.

12 "For six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease *from labor* so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as the stranger *residing with you*, may refresh themselves.

**12** "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease *from labor* so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, may refresh themselves.

12 You are to do your work for six days, but on the seventh day you are to refrain from work so that your ox and donkey may rest, and so the son of your maidservant and the alien may be refreshed.

12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

- The Sabbath of the land (Lev 24-25). They did not keep this law for 490 years and because they did, God sent them to be slaves in Babylon.

- God prophesied that they would be taken captive by Babylon (Lev 26:34-43; Jer 38:14-22; 2 Chr 36:21) and it was specifically prophesied by Jeremiah that it would be 70 years that they would be enslaved (2 Chr 36:17-21)

- This is important to us, as if we understand the Sabbath year, it helps us to understand the 70th week of Daniel

### **Jubilee Year**

The Jubilee Year ( $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$ th year), Lev 25. On the Jubilee year all slaves go free. All land returns to its rightful owner. Technically one did not sell land, they entered into what we would call a lease, paid for use of land, but the land's conveyance was actually by genealogy. There were also procedures by which a kinsman could redeem the land. Title deed had the deed inside and the instructions on how the kinsman could redeem the deed written on the outside (Rev 5 = title deed of the earth). Jubilee year, all debts are forgiven. This is spoken of as the "time of the restitution of all things." Acts 3, in Peter's second sermon, in referring to the second coming of Jesus Christ, he refers to it as 'the time of restitution of all things.' Real students of prophecy understand that everything in the Mosaic economy (the feasts, the Sabbatical year, etc) could probably argue that the Jubilee year is also prophetically significant: the time of restitution of all things, during which all slaves go free, all debts are forgiven, and the land returns to its rightful owners. So one can infer that the second coming of Jesus Christ will be on a Jubilee year, but the problem is that scholars are not sure when the Jubilee year will be. There are major divisions and problems in counting. It is not clear when they started, it is not clear by what you count, and there are elaborate complicated arguments justifying any of several systems.

13 Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be careful; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth.

13 Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth.

13 "Be careful about everything I've told you, and don't mention the name of other gods. Don't let them be heard in your mouth!"

13 And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

14 "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.

14 "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.

14 "Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival for me.

14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of **Abib**, for in that month you came out of Egypt. And no one is to appear before Me empty-handed.

15 You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

15 You are to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you are to eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month Abib, because in it you came out of Egypt. No one is to appear before me empty handed.

15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)

- "...Abib" - the same as Nisan

16 Also *you shall keep* the **Feast of the Harvest** of the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the **Feast of the Ingathering** at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.

16 Also *you shall observe* the Feast of the Harvest *of* the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.

16 You are to observe the Festival of Harvest, celebrating the first fruits of your work in planting the field, and the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather the fruit of your work from the field.

16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

- "...Feast of the Harvest" - the Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Weeks
- "...Feast of Ingathering" - the Feast of Tabernacles

17 Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

17 Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

17 Three times a year all your males shall appear in the presence of the Lord GOD."

**17** Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

- Seven Feasts of Moses, but these three are the ones where every able bodied male had to be in Jerusalem.

**18** "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

**18** "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

**18** "You are not to offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, and you are not to let the fat portion of my sacrifice remain overnight until morning.

**18** Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning.

**19** "You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.

**19** "You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.

19 "You are to bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God. "You are not to boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

19 The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

- This is the origin of "Kosher" - the issue of not having milk and beef together in the same meal is a rabbinical extension from this line. However, notice that Abraham served a "non-kosher" meal in Gen 18:6-8.

Kosher Laws: *Kashrut*; "kosher state" (Lev 11; Deut 14—esp. Ex 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21).

Separation of milk and meat products may derive from a misunderstanding of Ex 23:19.

Some scholars believe it was to prohibit a common pagan practice among the ancient Zabii, Ishmaelites (and still among some Arabs). A kid seethed in its mother's milk was used by certain pagans to propitiate the deities, and milk was sprinkled on the fruit trees, fields, and gardens, to improve the crops of the coming year. [Sources: Dr. Thompson, *The*

*Land and the Book*, Vol. 1, p.135; Spencer, *De Legibus Hebraeorum*, 2, 8; R. Jamieson, *Critical and Experimental Commentary on Old Testament*, p. 375.]

However...Abraham served the Lord a non-Kosher meal in Gen 18:7-8. Reformed Jews regard *kashrut* as no longer meaningful, but often accommodate some in deference to their "Observant" guests.

(g) Laws concerning the conquest (23:20-33)

**20** "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

**20** "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

**20** "Look, I'm sending an angel in front of you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I've prepared.

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

21 Be attentive to him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your rebellion, since My name is in him.

21 Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.

21 Be careful! Be sure to obey him. Don't rebel against him, because he won't forgive your transgression, since my Name is in him.

21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.

22 But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

22 But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

22 Indeed, if you carefully obey him and do everything that I say, then I'll be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries,

22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

23 For My angel will go before you and bring you into *the land of* the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.

23 For My angel will go before you and bring you in to *the land of* the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.

23 because my angel will go ahead of you and will bring you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I'll annihilate them.

23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

- See note: **Canaanite Genocide** in Deut 7

- From the table of nations (Gen 10:15-19), the people called Canaanites include those of: Sidon, Heth, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites

— These 11 people groups apparently were living in the land called Canaan at the time of the Israelite conquest.

24 You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their memorial stones in pieces.

24 You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their *sacred* pillars in pieces.

24 You are not to bow down to their gods or serve them. You are not to follow their practices, but you are to overthrow them completely and smash their sacred stones to pieces.

24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

25 And you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.

25 But you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.

25 You are to serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your food and water, and I'll remove sickness from you.

**25** And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

- Israel was promised immunity from disease if obedient to the Law

— Every blind, deaf, crippled or diseased person among them was a witness to their failure in this respect (Deut 28:15-23)

— In the NT, Jesus' healing of the sick was undoing the work of Satan (Acts 10:38)

26 There will be no one miscarrying or unable to have children in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

26 There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

26 No woman will miscarry or be barren in your land, and I'll make every day of your life complete.

26 There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.

27 I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you.

27 I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you.

27 "I'll go ahead of you and terrorize all the people to whom you are coming. I'll confuse your enemies and make them turn their backs on you and run away.

**27** I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

28 And I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from you.

28 I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.

28 I'll send hornets ahead of you and they'll drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.

28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

29 I will not drive them out from you in a single year, so that the land will not become desolate and the animals of the field become too numerous for you.

29 I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

29 I won't drive them out before you in a single year, so that the land does not become desolate and so that wild animals do not overrun you.

29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee.

30 I will drive them out from you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.

30 I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.

30 I'll drive them out ahead of you little by little until you increase in numbers and possess the land.

30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

31 I will set your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the *Euphrates* River; for I will hand over the inhabitants of the land to you, and you will drive them out from you.

31 I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates*; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.

31 "I'll set your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River, bringing the inhabitants of the land under your control, and you are to drive them out ahead of you.

31 And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.

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

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

32 You are not to make a covenant with them or with their gods.

32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

33 They shall not live in your land, otherwise they will make you sin against Me; for *if* you serve their gods, it is certain to be a snare to you."

33 They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

33 They are not to live in your land. Otherwise they will cause you to sin against me. If you worship their gods, it will become a snare for you."

33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.