

EXODUS 20:18-23:33

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Exodus chapter 20 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

We are currently in a section that deals with the Law and it will cover Exodus chapters 19-24.

We finished up last time looking at the Ten Commandments and we saw that the first four Laws on the first tablet of stone covered our relationship with God. It all starts with God.

And the next six Laws on the second tablet of stone covered our relationship with our fellow man. If your relationship with God is off, then your relationship with your fellow man will also be off and we see how that plays out in our own lives and in the lives of others!

Let me share with you what these ten Laws of God are and then we will get into our text this evening. This is what God spoke to Moses,

“You shall have no other gods before Me.”

“You shall not make a carved image of anything . . . to bow down and worship.”

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

“Honor your father and your mother.”

“You shall not murder.”

“You shall not commit adultery.”

“You shall not steal.”

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

“You shall not covet.”

There is nothing wrong with what God instructed Moses. The problem is not the Law, the Law of God is perfect.

So man can't keep this Law perfectly and the reality is, the Law is powerless to change our human nature. Yes, there are laws out there that try to protect life and property by regulating human behavior, but for some, they can't even follow that.

Laws are in place to prevent anarchy and bring about order, but they can't change a person's heart.

Then what is the point of the Law if it can't save us? What is the point of the Law if it can only show us how far away from God we really are?

Here is the reason for the Law, besides preventing anarchy and bringing about some order to a society. In Psalm 19:7 we are told, "**The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.**"

There it is! The Law is to bring us to Jesus and Paul makes that point in Galatians 3:24-26, "**Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**"

We are sons of God through faith in Christ for we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone! The Law can't save us. It is like a mirror and just shows us what we are like, sinners!

So the Law has been given and as we pick up our study this evening in Exodus chapter 20, beginning in verse 18, look at the response of the people as they heard the Law given to them!

EXODUS 20**VERSES 18-21**

Why were they so afraid?

Because they saw the holiness of God. There were the sounds of thunder, the flashes of lightning and it did not draw them closer to God, but it pushed them farther away from God.

That is the Law, it shows us our sin, but it is Grace that draws us to God!

At this point they had a clear picture of what the Law was all about, and they saw their own sinful condition.

Because of that they stood afar off from God, and they wanted to hear from Moses as God spoke to Him, they were afraid of dying if God spoke directly to them.

Sadly, as time went by, they came to the conclusion that by keeping the Law they could be righteous, they lost that fear of God and His righteousness and their sinfulness.

Paul expounds on this in Philippians 3:6 as he spoke of himself before he was saved, **“concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”**

As a Pharisee, he saw that by his work, his actions, the keeping of the Law he was blameless, even though covetousness ate at him! Paul had to come to the end of himself, trying to work his way into heaven, and he realized that it was only through Christ and His righteousness imputed into his life that can make Him white as snow! And the same is true for us!

So the children of Israel want Moses to be the mediator between God and them.

For us today, we too have a Mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus Christ.

Paul makes that point in I Timothy 2:5, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”**

We can't approach God in our righteousness, by the Law because our righteousness is like filthy rags before Him. We can only approach God through Jesus Christ. But many today have lost that fear of God and they do as they please not realizing that one day that will stand before Him in their sin!

And here in Exodus 20:20-21 Moses doesn't want them to fear but to show them their sin so that they **“may not sin.”** God is testing their hearts, not so He can find out where they are at, but so that they can see where they are at!

But tragically, they will lose the fear of God and they will sin in just 40 days making a golden calf to worship God by!

VERSES 22-26

Where does God start in regard to the giving of the Law of sacrifice?

He begins with the heart of worship because if the heart of worship is corrupted then it will affect all parts of our lives!

And the Lord instructs them to make these altars to worship Him by and yet they were very plain.

Why were these altars of worship so plain?

Let me give you this perspective. I am sure you have seen the beautiful cathedrals in Europe and here in the United States and as you go in you stand in awe of them.

What is the problem with that?

It takes our attention away from the Lord and we tend to focus on the beauty of these buildings instead of the Lord.

Also, you cannot add anything to the sacrifice that was being made, you cannot add to the work of salvation!

Peter tells us in I Peter 1:18-21, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

Thus, adding anything to the finished work of Christ is meaningless and it will only cheapen it, it won't make it better.

You see, the focus is not on the beautiful altar but on the Sacrifice, Jesus!

Remember what Jesus in John 4:24, **“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”**

God wants us to worship Him in Spirit, not in the flesh! God wants us to worship Him in the truth and not by deception or feelings!

As we continue on in Exodus, we will see that Exodus chapters 21-23 focus on the Civil Law or the Judicial Law.

The focus here is how they were to function as a nation, how they were to live and the consequences if they broke these laws.

EXODUS 21**VERSES 1-4**

These were the laws the judges would follow.

Now, when judges are spoken of, they are called “*Elohim*” or “*gods*” with a small “*g*”.

And the idea here was they were representing God or acting in the place of God as they handed out these ordinances, made these judgments in these matters for the people.

Please understand that the Bible is not teaching that we are “*Gods*” with a big “*G*.”

There is only ***ONE GOD!***

Now let me say this. As some read these Laws of God, they are outraged but they were established to show that life is important and there needs to be rules to govern life or man will abuse man. And that is what we see today, the abuse of man!

One writer put it like this, “*THESE different regulations are as remarkable for their justice and prudence as for their humanity. Their great tendency is to show the valuableness of human life, and the necessity of having peace and good understanding in every neighbourhood; and they possess that quality which should be the object of all good and wholesome laws-the prevention of crimes.*” (Adam Clarke)

I hope that makes sense because the first point we are going to talk about is – ***SLAVERY!***

And this makes some so mad, they are outraged that God is endorsing slavery!

In fact, some think that the Bible is responsible for slavery. The opposite is true; slavery existed long before Israel or Moses.

In fact, the Bible is responsible for the elimination of slavery, not its establishment.

Spurgeon put it like this, ***“Moses did not institute slavery in any shape; the laws concerning it were made on purpose to repress it, to confine it within very narrow bounds, and ultimately to put an end to it.”***

Please understand that God was not condoning slavery but because of the slavery that was practiced and the wicked treatment of slaves, He was setting laws to protect them, showing them mercy.

Again, He was not instituting slavery, but He was regulating it you might say.

A Hebrew slave would work for six years and then he would be set free in the seventh year.

He could also take with him that which he brought with him, but he could not take that which was his masters or what his master had given him.

The problem today here in America is the misinformation we believe is true. And yes, slavery in America was wrong and it was evil, for the most part and it help led our nation into a Civil War.

This type of slavery in America is like what the Jews suffered at the hands of the Egyptians, but this is not what God is speaking of!

What were some of the reasons that the children of Israel might become slaves?

Here are four basic reasons:

- ***A father might sell his children into slavery – Exodus 21:7.***
- ***If a thief had nothing with which to pay restitution for what he took – Exodus 22:3.***
- ***If they were extremely poor, they might sell their liberty – Leviticus – 25:39.***
- ***If they became bankrupt, they might become a slave – II Kings 4:1.***

As one historian put it regarding slavery in the Bible, *“This proves that the Biblical form of slavery had a constructive purpose. It was for the benefit of the servant as well as the master. . . . By selling themselves to other members of the covenant community, debtors became members of stable households, where their needs were met and where they could get on-the-job training. They learned how to work in the context of a family. This was all in preparation for their ultimate freedom. Thus slavery had a redemptive purpose. Its goal was not perpetual bondage but responsible independence. The Hebrew servant was bound for freedom.”*

VERSES 5-6

After six years, if the slave loved his master he could become his slave for life, not out of obligation, but out of love.

The writers of the New Testament picked up on this and called themselves *“Bondservants”* or *“Bondslaves”* of Jesus Christ. (See Romans 1:1, James 1:1, II Peter 1:1, Jude 1:1)

Before we came to Christ we were in bondage to sin!

But, when we freely gave our life to our Master, Jesus Christ it was done out of love, and we now serve Him out of that same love.

May we desire to be a bondslave of Jesus Christ, not out of the Law but out of love for Him!

VERSES 7-11

We read this and think this is unfair to women. Please understand that in that culture women were thought of as property and God was elevating them, protecting them.

A father could sell his daughter to be the wife of a man or part of his concubines, but the man would have to pay a dowry or alimony in advance in case he divorced her or let her go.

And again, God is not endorsing polygamy, but He is regulating it to protect the women!

The idea here is that of selling his daughter in marriage not as a slave. We need to keep that in mind, or it will seem that God is being unfair here. But God is always righteous and fair and if we truly don't understand something, we need to search further.

One writer makes it clear as he wrote, *“Refers to a girl who is sold by her father, not for slavery, but for marriage.”* (Kaiser)

And just to sum this up so there is no misunderstanding here, we are told, *“To understand these laws, it is necessary to know the cultural context. While we do not have all the details we might like, we know enough to recognize that these laws had a benevolent purpose. The man who sold his daughter was not trying to get rid of her but to improve her prospects in life.”*

What this verse describes was really a form of arranged marriage, which, however strange it may sound to most Americans, has been common in many parts of the world for most of human history. A poor man would send his daughter to a rich man in the hope that she would become a permanent member of his household. She entered into a conditional form of servitude, hoping that eventually she might marry the [master or the] master's son.”

I hope that clears things up for you if you were unclear about this.

VERSES 12-14

I know, there are many people who are against capital punishment, but it was established to protect a society from evil.

And please don't think capital punishment was established here in Exodus with the Law.

Back in Genesis 9:6 we are told, "**Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.**"

God was just reminding them of this, and He was making it part of the Law.

And it is not just an Old Testament idea. Paul tells us in Romans 13:3-4, "**For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.**"

And God makes it clear, that if premeditation is the issue, then that person should be put to death!

Now, if it was not premeditated murder then God would provide cities of refuge, three on the east side of the Jordan River and three on the west side of the Jordan River, spread out from north to south.

And you can read of these cities in Numbers chapter 35 and Joshua chapter 20.

If you fled to one of these cities you would be protected unless you committed premeditated murder, then you would be handed over to the avenger of blood and be put to death.

If you premeditated a murder, then you could not even take refuge at the altar of God because God will hold you responsible and you will be taken from the altar and put to death!

VERSES 15-17

Why was this disrespect towards parents a capital offense?

Because, if there is no respect in the home that child will not respect anyone, and they will be a detriment to a society!

And we see the consequences of that today being manifested in our society – ***NO***

RESPECT FOR ANYONE!

And the cursing of a father or mother does not mean using swear words because there were no swear words in the Hebrew language. It is acting out in anger and not just a one-time event. But it is the nature of this son or daughter!

This is interesting to me. Kidnapping was a capital offense. I wonder if that were true today how many would think twice about committing this crime!

Again, these are civil laws and look at how God is trying to protect people.

Keep in mind that slavery back then and throughout history was a form of kidnapping. You would go to an area and take as many people you wanted to sell as slaves!

And what we see here is that God is forbidding that and the incentive not to do this, was that if you did you would be put to death. I guess it would not help you if you were caught, but it was a deterrent to others!

VERSES 18-19

Here we see fair compensation for personal injury – not millions of dollars for spilling hot coffee on your lap!

VERSES 20-21

Here are laws to protect servants. In other cultures, you could kill your slave and it was totally legal because they were your property. So God is trying to protect slaves.

VERSES 22-25

Here we see laws of retribution. If you injure a pregnant woman and she gives birth and the child lives, then the husband would impose a fine upon him and the payment would be according to the judges.

But if the child died it is murder and he shall be put to death.

In God's eyes, at any stage of pregnancy, starting at conception, if you kill that child, it is murder!

Look at how many murderers there are today as well over 60 million babies that have been murdered in the womb and we have made it legal in our nation but not in God's eyes!

Again, the laws here were not meant for revenge or vengeance but retribution for what was done – a fair judgment! In other words, the penalty should fit the crime!

VERSES 26-27

For a servant, if this was done to him, he was to be set free.

This was teaching restraint on the part of the master for if he lost control, he could lose his servant!

VERSES 28-32

We might call these laws, regulations regarding neglect on the owner of an animal.

If you have an animal that is violent, you need to keep him away from others or you could be put to death or pay a heavy fine if they kill a person.

The exception was if they gored a servant, then they would pay 30 shekels of silver, the price of a slave, the price that Judas betrayed the Lord for – Matthew 26:15.

VERSES 33-36

Here we see laws dealing with negligence and restitution.

If you were negligent and it causes your neighbors animal to die, you were obligated to pay restitution.

I guess the idea is *“You break it you buy it!”*

Responsibility and fairness are the idea, and it would be great to go back to this in our court system!

EXODUS 22

VERSES 1-4

If you stole something you had to restore it plus there was an additional penalty. And the penalty could be substantial, depending on what was stolen!

Thus, this was an incentive not to steal.

If you stole an ox, you had to repay them five oxen. If they stole a sheep, then they would have to repay them with four sheep!

Also, if a thief was caught red-handed so that the owner’s animal was returned to him immediately and unharmed and yet, the thief still had to pay his victim back double.

Now, if the person couldn't pay, he could be sold into slavery and the money used to pay the person he stole from.

We also see the homeowner have the right to defend himself and his property. If a thief came in at night and was killed, that was reasonable force.

But he could not do that in the daytime, why?

Because he could see, identify the person and bring that person to the judges!

With more light comes more responsibility and that is true in a spiritual sense for us as well!

Now, seeing that you had to repay the person for what you stole, and it was substantial, it was truly an incentive not to do it.

In saying that, look at our system today and how is it working?

Not too well. In our prison systems today: local, state and federal, there are some two million in prison out of a population of some 336 million!

And some 70% – 80% that get released from prison, end up going back to prison!

No incentive for them to stay out, I guess.

VERSES 5-8

You were responsible to respect the property of others and if you didn't you had to pay restitution.

If you were to watch something for someone you were responsible.

For us as Christians, say we hit a ball through someone's window. We are responsible to notify that person and pay them restitution for the window and not run away!

VERSES 9-13

Once again, we see the principle for restitution, that you were responsible for your actions.

And this is how a healthy society should function. Neighbors should be close friends; they should watch out for each other and trust each other.

But when a society breaks down, we see the opposite is true. People don't look out for each other, and they really don't care about another person's property, to look out for it, watch for any trouble.

VERSES 14-15

Now if you borrow an ox to plow your fields and it died, you had to pay the owner back.

But if the owner is overseeing the work, then you don't have to pay him back if the animal dies.

VERSES 16-17

Here we see a law regarding a man who seduces a woman, has sex with her.

And please understand that God is not saying that sex before marriage is okay. What He is saying is that if you do get involved in this activity, it will cost you.

You see, for the man, he has to hope that the father would allow him to marry her and pay the "*bride price*" for her.

If her father refused, he would still have to pay the "*bride price*" and go away with nothing.

This was a dowry or what we might call alimony in advance.

Of this law, Clarke tells us, *“This was an exceedingly wise and humane law, and must have operated powerfully against seduction and fornication; because the person who might feel inclined to take the advantage of a young woman knew that he must marry her, and give her a dowry.”*

Paul, in I Corinthians 6:15-20 tells us, **“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”**

Tragically, today we see sex before marriage a common practice and it ends up destroying lives, not making them better.

I know, some feel that it is better to get to know the other person by living together before marriage. That is wrong. You see, on average, researchers found that couples who cohabited before marriage had a 33 percent higher chance of divorcing than couples who moved in together after the wedding ceremony.

Think about it. Young women think if they give themselves over to a young man he will love her, but the reality is, he won’t!

I think David Guzik had it correct when he wrote, *“Far too many people - especially women - sell themselves cheaply by easily giving away their virginity. A man illustrated this with a true story about a friend who owned an antique store and had a table for sale. The table was worth \$600, but was marked down to \$300. A man tried to bargain her down to \$200, and not only did she refuse, but she realized the true value of the table, and upped the price to its true worth - even when offered \$300. The man finally bought the table for \$600, and certainly treated it like a \$600 table - because it’s worth had been fought for. Many women who know men treat them shabbily have contributed to the problem by selling themselves cheaply.”*

Be wise, be obedient to the Law of God because He loves you and wants what is best for your life!

VERSES 18-20

Here we see three capital crimes spoken of. And when you read what these are you may wonder, at least I do, why does God even have to tell us not to do these things? They are so gross and evil.

Look at what God is speaking against. They are,

SORCERY: Witchcraft and the taking of mind-altering drugs was a capital crime, you would be put to death! This was practiced in the ancient world as well as we see today!

Today we see Christian witches, are you kidding me? Christian tarot cards. All kinds of wicked things because we don’t take God’s Word seriously and thus, we do as we please not what He has spoken!

BESTIALITY: Having sex with other animals was practiced in the ancient world as well as today and God forbids this.

Are you kidding me, that people would do something like this?

It is true and when you reject God, He will give you over to whatever debased thing you have in your mind, and this is very evil and gross!

And think about this. Many feel that a man having sex with a monkey transmitted AIDS, that is how it got started. In God's Law, that man would have been put to death and the AIDS epidemic would not have even started. God's Laws are for our good, may we not forget that!

SACRIFICING TO OTHER GODS: Why was this so important? Because a life apart from the true and living God is a life that is on a destructive course and God was trying to show them not to go down that path, there is nothing good that could be found on it!

VERSES 21-27

If you want to see how the moral character of a society, of a nation is, look at how they treat strangers, how they treat others!

In America, look at how people take advantage of the poor, the elderly, and-so-on.

We have all these rip-off artists today who scam people out of money. I can't tell you how many people in Africa want to send me millions of dollars to continue on the work of the ministry! Scam artists and they only need one to take a bite and they will be hooked!

How cold and hard their heart is, so much so they can cheat people out of all their money and go to sleep at night not even feeling bad about it.

But make no mistake about it, they will have to stand before **THE JUDGE** one day and they won't be able to scam Him!

And this was interesting to me. Charging interest on loans to the poor was not allowed, you were not to take advantage of them.

But interest, within reason could be charged to others but again, today we see how companies take advantage of this and charge high rates on loans, especially on credit cards!

They are taking advantage of people. And God wants them to understand that He is watching out for the downtrodden, the poor, the widows and-so-on. He hears their cry, and He will repay those who take advantage of them!

VERSE 28

Our tongue can bless God and curse people. The Lord tells us here that we are not to speak evil of those in authority over us.

As I have said before, this is one that I had to learn. I would join in and even post jokes about President Obama and the Lord showed me that was wrong. And it was on Facebook so all could see what I was saying. And, even if it wasn't where many could see what I was saying, God saw, He knew, and it was wrong.

It was not that I had to agree with what he was doing, but I had to respect the office he was in.

Think about that for a minute. The most basic measure of holiness is in what we say. God cares how we talk about Him and those in rightful authority over us.

“According to Clarke and others, the context shows that God (elohim) here is a reference to judges.

There were laws against the blaspheming of God, but here – combined with nor curse a ruler of your people – suggests that elohim here refers to Israel’s legal judges, as it sometimes does (Exodus 22:9, Psalm 82:6).” (David Guzik)

Cole put it like this in regard to something Paul the apostle did. He wrote, *“This is the famous verse quoted by Paul at his trial before the high priest (Acts 23:5).”*

As I have said, we may not agree with what they say or do and thus, instead of mocking them and making fun of them, or putting them down, pray for them! (See Romans 13:1-7)

VERSES 29-30

So the first fruits of everything that was born or grown belonged to God.

What about the firstborn of your sons that was to be given to the Lord, how was that done?

That was done through redemption, the giving of money to substitute for the son.
(Exodus 34:19-20)

Money was also substituted for the firstborn among unclean animals, but the firstborn among clean animals was sacrificed to the LORD.

How does that apply to us today?

We are to respect God by giving to Him that which is due Him- ***OUR BEST!***

VERSE 31

We are not to be like the animals, scavenging, tearing apart the flesh of another but to be holy men, set apart for God and to bring glory to Him.

Peter put it like this in I Peter 1:13-16, **“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’”**

We are to walk in the Spirit and as we walk in the Spirit, being directed by Him and obeying Him, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh! (Galatians 5:16-17)

EXODUS 23

VERSES 1-3

Our speech needs to be truthful; I would think the news media and our politicians will have to answer God on that one. But we as well need to be honest, truthful, we are not to pervert justice by what we are saying.

And this is just being wise. Don't follow an evil group because before you know it, you will be following their evil ways.

Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 15:33, **“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”**

That is the truth even though many times we don't believe it, we think we can handle it.

YOU CAN'T!

Also, you are not to show partiality to the poor or the rich for that matter, God wants honesty!

VERSES 4-9

Keep in mind that this is the Old Testament, and we see God instruct His people to care for those that you like and those that you don't like! It truly is a New Testament principle!

Jesus put it like this in Matthew 5:43-48, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”**

In other words, if we want to represent the Lord faithfully, correctly, we need to love people as He does, unconditionally and as we do it will bring glory to God!

So look out for others, watch out for their things because you care for their well-being.

As I have said, don't pervert justice to help a poor person out. If they did wrong, they need to be accountable for their actions, be they rich or poor!

Don't be taken in by false talk and in doing so you hurt others.

Don't take a bribe because it will pervert justice. How true that is.

Don't oppress anyone, even strangers.

And for us, we were in bondage in this world and were rescued out of that bondage because someone cared for us. May we do no less!

VERSES 10-13

There was not only the Sabbath week where you work for six days and rest on the seventh day, taking time to rest in the Lord. But there were also the Sabbath years.

What does that mean?

It means that you could work the land for six years but let it rest in the seventh year. If they obeyed, the Lord would provide enough of a harvest in the sixth year to provide for them in the seventh and eighth year also until the harvest could be brought in that eighth year.

Now, once they got into the land of Canaan, they did not obey the Lord for 490 years and thus, they owed the Lord 70 years to let the land rest and that is how long they were in captivity in Babylon! They went into captivity because they turned from the Lord, but the number of years was based on not letting the land rest as the Lord instructed them!

God says what He means and means what He says, and we can listen to Him and be blessed or not listen and suffer the consequences!

VERSES 14-17

All the Jewish males who were 13 years old and up, that were able, were required to come to Jerusalem for these three feasts, once they got into in the land of Canaan.

These are the feasts:

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD/PASSOVER: This included both Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Passover occurred on the 14th of Nisan and then on the 15th of Nisan and running for seven days began the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a spring feast that occurred in March/April during the barley harvest, and it celebrated their deliverance from their bondage in Egypt.

PENTECOST: This was also called the Feast of Harvest, which took place 50 days after Passover to commemorate the giving of the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai, which took place 50 days after they left Egypt. It was during the time of the wheat harvest. For us, the church was born on Pentecost!

TABERNACLES: Also called the Feast of Ingathering and it occurred in September/October and was to commemorate the Israelites dwelling in tents for forty years in their wilderness journey!

VERSES 18-19

Many feel this is related to the Passover meal.

You see, before you can partake of this meal you had to remove the leaven from your home. You had to do this before the lamb was slain, his blood shed.

Leaven is a type of sin in the Scriptures.

As Christians, we are a new creation in Christ and those old things have passed away, all things are new. Thus, don't live in sin, live in Christ!

Now why couldn't they boil a young goat in its mother's milk?

Because this was a Canaanite practice, a fertility rite to their god and thus, the Lord did not want them to practice this.

Now the Jewish people have taken this Law and expounded on it far beyond what God has said. They believe that you can't eat meat and milk at the same time for the meat you eat may come from a calf and the milk from its mother and as you eat and drink the gastric juices boil these things and you are breaking the law!

Sorry, that is not only foolish, but it is not Biblical! But even today you will not find meat products being served with milk products – it isn't kosher!

Just a quick story to show you how crazy this really is.

Several years ago, Pastor Joe Focht took a group of people to Israel and as they were having a meal at their hotel, the room was divided.

One side had meat being served, the other had dairy products and the two shall never mix.

Well, that is until Calvary Chapel arrived. One of the group members was asking for cream for their coffee and Frank, Pastor Joe's right hand man, stood up and said that he would get some. And he did.

But before long, when the people saw what happened, a lot of yelling was going on because they were mixing milk and meat and breaking this law.

Well, Frank spoke up and said that they were eating chicken and that is not meat. They didn't buy his argument, but Frank didn't give up. He said to them, ***"You can't milk a chicken!"***

That didn't matter, they were not going to give in, Frank was not going to change 2,000 years of tradition, even if what they were doing was not Biblical!

VERSES 20-21

This Angel of the Lord, I believe, is none other than an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ and He would lead them in the way they were to go!

What is interesting to me is that the Lord said, **"For My Name is in Him."**

How true that is for His name is - ***YAH-SHUA***, the name of ***YAHWEH*** is in Jesus, He is God!

And just as Jesus was leading the Children of Israel, He is leading us and we too must walk by faith, trusting in Him, obeying His Laws, obeying His voice!

VERSES 22-26

Victory is seen in their obedience. Now, as some read this, they feel that this is nothing more than an Old Testament teaching and it is not found in the New Testament.

I don't believe that.

You see, as we obey the Lord there are those victories in our lives, the enemies that try to bring us down, areas in our life that need to change and that can only be accomplished, that victory will only be found in Him as we obey Him!

VERSES 27-30

God's plan of victory was best, to drive out the enemy little by little until the children of Israel could take over the land.

God does the same with us, driving out the enemy in our lives little by little, even though we would rather have them gone right now!

You might be saying, ***"I've been a Christian for a year now, I go to Bible studies all the time, and I am still defeated!"***

Don't give up, God is working in your life, and you can see that where you are today is farther in the Lord than a year ago!

Make no mistake about it, Christian maturity will not be completed until we go home to be with the Lord. But we should be maturing in this life and not remain baby Christians all our life.

And this maturity is the result of many victories over the enemy, and it is over long periods of time and the reason that God designed it that way is so that we can learn to depend upon Him and not upon our own strength!

Warfare does keep us on our knees and that is a good thing.

James put it like this, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”** James 1:2-4.

Be patient and follow the Lord as He leads your life, and He will drive out the enemies little by little!

VERSES 31-33

The borders of Israel’s inheritance were huge, and they never fully possessed all that God have given them even though in Solomon’s day they came close.

The area covered about 330 miles north to south and 80 to 100 miles wide.

And today, they have far less, and they continue to give it away, they continue to divide the land and make covenants with other nations, giving away what the Lord had given to them!

Think about this for a minute.

God has given you a great inheritance, what are you giving away by making covenants with the enemy, dividing up all that God has given you?

What enemy?

Lust, pornography, greed, covetousness, evil speaking, hatred, lying, cheating and the list of enemies goes on-and-on. Don’t give in to the enemy, don’t make a covenant with them, but crucify the flesh and walk in the Spirit.

Obeys the Lord, follow Him and see the blessings that He will pour in your life and through your life for His glory!

As Christians, we stop short of all that God has for us many times, as I have said.

Let me close this evening with these words from Ray Stedman. He wrote,

“You can possess all that you want but never more than you take. If you’re satisfied with where you are and how much of the Spirit you possess you’ll never take any more than what you have. If you haven’t possessed more it’s because you haven’t wanted more - you can have all you want.”

May we take into our lives all that God has for us and not just be satisfied where we are at. He wants to do exceedingly abundantly in our lives, more than we can ever imagine! May we walk by faith and take all that God has for us to be used for His glory!