

(Through the Bible) Exodus 23-25

by Chuck Smith

God's expectations for His people include being honest, kind, obedient, and generous, and He promises to bless and protect those who follow these expectations.

Duration: 41:39

Scripture: Exodus 23:31

Topics: "Social Justice", "Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses various teachings from the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of judges not receiving gifts in order to maintain impartiality in their judgments. The preacher also highlights the commandment to not oppress strangers, reminding the listeners of their own experience as strangers in Egypt. He then delves into the concept of the seventh year, where the land is to rest and be left for the poor to eat from. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of giving from the heart and not being pressured or deceitful in one's giving.

Transcript

Thou shalt not raise a false report, perjury, to put your hand with the wicked, to be an unrighteous witness. In other words, conspiracy in perjury. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, not to get into a riotous situation.

Neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many, to wrest judgment. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. Now, the poor man, look also at verse 9, or rather at verse 15.

Thou shalt keep the feast of the unleavened bread. Beg your pardon, verse 6, Leviticus 19, verse 6. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in his cause. First of all, you shall not countenance the poor in his cause.

Then you're not to wrest the judgment of thy poor in the cause. In other words, the judgment has to be fair. And you're not to countenance him just because he's poor, nor are you to wrest judgment from him because he is poor.

In other words, his condition, financially, should have nothing to do with the judgment. The judgment has to be a fair judgment. Not giving him an advantage because he is poor, neither are you to give him a disadvantage because he is poor.

You're not to take that into consideration. Judgment has to be fair across the board. If a man meet your enemy's ox, or his ass going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.

Now, that's hard to do. If you see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and you wouldn't forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him. If you see your neighbor's donkey and it's just sort of collapsed under the burden, and you just walk by, that's not right.

God wants you to be kind towards the animals. You're to help it, even though the neighbor hates you, and you've got a big feud going with him. That animal hasn't got a feud going with you.

And you should be merciful towards the animal. God wants us to be merciful towards animals. Keep thee far from a false matter.

And the innocent and the righteous, lay thou not, for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no gift. Now, these are to the judges.

They're not to take any gift. For the gift blinds the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. So, judges weren't to receive gift lest they would be influenced by that gift and would not give true judgment.

Also, thou shalt not oppress a stranger. For you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers to the land of Egypt. Now, six years you shall sow the land and gather the fruits.

But the seventh year, we get the six in one pattern again. And we've already talked about the six years of sowing. The seventh year, let the ground rest.

Let it lie still that the poor of thy people may eat and leave what they leave to the beast of the field. And in like manner thou shalt deal with the vineyard and with the olive yard. In other words, the seventh year, it just is for the poor people.

Let it just rest. Whatever grows up naturally, whatever seeds were left in the ground, let it grow. Let the poor go out and gather it.

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

And in all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect. Be careful. Keep it carefully.

And make no mention of the name of other gods. Neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

So we have a Thanksgiving feast. They had three feasts. The first one is the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The second one is the Feast of Passover, which takes place 50 days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread when you are bringing in the first of your winter grains. And so it's the first fruits of the winter grain that is brought in there in June. The wheat, the winter wheat that they have sown.

The third feast was equivalent to our Thanksgiving feast and it takes place in the harvest time of the year when you have gathered of thy labors out of the field. The third feast and it's equivalent to our Thanksgiving. So three times in the year all of your mails shall appear before the Lord God.

Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with unleavened bread. Neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain till morning. The first of the first fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of Jehovah thy God.

Thou shalt not see the kid in his mother's mouth. Now from this little scripture the Jews have created the whole interpretation of not eating dairy products with meat products and any meal. Because the law says thou shalt not see the kid in its mother's mouth.

So they refuse to eat any meat and dairy products together because of this little scripture. Now what is the scripture actually prohibiting? If you kill a little goat to eat it you're not to boil it in its own mother's milk. That's what the law is prohibiting.

But they say that if you eat the shish kebab and you're also eating cheese at the same meal you don't know but what that cheese was made from the mother's milk and that in your stomach the churning and boiling the meat of the kid is being seeded in its mother's milk in your stomach. And so they really are very very religious about this today. You go to Jerusalem and even those that don't believe in God follow the kosher habits of eating.

They won't drink milk at a meal where they have meat nor will and it's so sad because they have this delicious rolls and they serve you margarine because you're having meat to eat. They will not mix any dairy products with meat products at a meal lest they be guilty of seeding a kid in its mother's milk. That's what Jesus was talking about when he said to the Pharisees hey you strain at a gnat and you swallow a camel.

Now why would they strain at a gnat? Because you're not to eat anything that hasn't been thoroughly bled. So if you're jogging along and a gnat gets in your mouth and gets stuck in your throat you'd see these guys putting their finger down trying to heave and do everything coughing and carrying on horribly trying to get that gnat out because man if you eat that gnat you know that hasn't been bled thoroughly you violated the law and there's no way they're going to swallow that gnat and you'd see them really coughing and heaving and doing this big thing and Jesus says hey you know you're straining at a gnat but just swallow a camel. You know they in other areas just gloss things, change things, misinterpreted things to where they could get by with horrible things and yet on the little issues oh did they get so picky on the little insignificant issues but the major issues of justice and mercy and that you know they just interpreted right around those and so Christ's after them on these things.

Now the Lord is promising when they go into the land that He's going to send an angel before them to keep them in the way and to bring them into the place which God has prepared. I believe that this angel of course is Jesus Christ. The Lord said, Beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not for he will not pardon your transgressions for my name is in him.

But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice and do all that I speak then I will be an enemy unto your enemies an adversary to your adversaries for my angel shall go before thee and bring thee into the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites and I will cut them off. You remember when Joshua was going out looking over the city of Jericho he saw the captain of the Lord's host and he said, Are you for us or against us? And the angel answered, As the captain of the Lord's host have I come. So the Lord's host.

The angel of the Lord going before them to lead them in. And many Bible scholars accept this as one of the appearances of Christ. The Theophany.

An appearance of God in the Old Testament. Actually in the person of Christ. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods.

That is the Hivites and the Jebusites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and so forth. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods nor serve them nor do any of their works but thou shalt utterly overthrow them and quite break down their images. 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.

There shall nothing cast their young nor be barren in the land. The number of thy days I will fulfill. I will send my fear before thee and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come.

I will make all thine enemies turn their backs to thee. I will send hornets before thee. I shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, the Hittite from before thee.

I will not drive them out from before thee in one year lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee until thou be increased and inherit the land." So, these are the blessings. These are the things I'm going to do for you predicated upon your serving Me.

These are the benefits, the fringe benefits of serving Me. I will do all of these things. I'll go before you.

I'll drive out the enemy and so forth. Now, in this we find the principles of God's victory and the way He brings forth victory in our lives. For these Jebusites and Hivites and so forth are a type of the giants in our flesh.

Coming into the promised land is coming into the life of the Spirit and the victory of the Spirit. The overcoming life. Coming out of the wilderness, out of the yo-yo Christian experience where you're up and down and up and down into a beautiful, victorious, overcoming life in Christ Jesus.

A life of victory. A life after the Spirit, not after the flesh. And these enemies that were in the land represent those aspects of our flesh where it so often has defeated us and conquered us.

But God is promising victory over anger, over anxiety, over fears, over temper, over any area of the flesh where you are in bondage to your own flesh. God is promising you the victory. But it comes one area at a time, little by little.

I won't drive them all out in one year. God doesn't just give you instant perfection. But we're growing in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And so the processes of God's victory are reiterated for us here. Until we inherit the land. I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea into the Sea of the Philistines, which would be the Mediterranean, 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. Thou shalt make no covenant with them nor with their gods. Now in a little while, as we move on, we're going to find that they violated this commandment and they made a covenant with the Gibeonites.

And we'll deal with the problems that came from the disobedience of this command. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me. For if thou serve their gods, it will be a snare to you.

And it was. And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come nearer to the Lord, but thou shalt not come near, neither shall the people go up with him.

And Moses came up and told the people all the words of the Lord and the judgments. And all of the people answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath said we will do. Words are sure cheap.

Here Moses lays upon them all these judgments. They said, Oh, everything the Lord said we will do. Oh God, everything I have belongs to you.

Words are sure cheap, aren't they? It's too bad. Because it isn't what I say that really counts. It's what I do.

And so Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. He rose up early in the morning. He built an altar under the hill with twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

And he sent the young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed people's offerings of oxen unto the Lord. Moses took half the blood, put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people.

And they said, All that the Lord has said we will do and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. And so this experience of sprinkling the people with the blood from these sacrifices and so forth, the blood covenant is referred to in the book of Hebrews.

And as we were going through the book of Hebrews, we dealt with all of the things under the law, sanctified with the blood for without the shedding of blood was nothing sanctified. And how the new covenant that we have in Christ, of course, was also sanctified through the blood of Christ, the better covenant. This was the old covenant that was disannulled.

This is the old covenant that didn't work. Why? Because the old covenant was predicated upon the people doing these things. It was predicated upon the people's faithfulness.

The people weren't faithful. So God has established in Christ a new covenant that is predicated now upon the faithfulness of God to do what He said He would do. Now, because the new covenant is predicated upon God's faithfulness, the new covenant will stand.

It cannot fail because God will not fail. So I thank God for the new covenant relationship that I have with God through Jesus Christ, a covenant that cannot fail. I'm sure God's going to do all that He has said He is going to do through Christ.

And now it's not predicated upon my doing, but my believing in God and in that work of Jesus Christ. And I don't have to send 25 bucks. Then went up Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and the 70 of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel.

And there was under His feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were, as the body of heaven in clearness. So they saw God, they saw the glassy sea before the throne of God. John describes

it, the sea of glass, crystal, before the throne of God.

Now you say, wait a minute. What do you mean they saw God? Because in the gospel of John, John declares no man have seen God at any time. But the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath manifested Him.

What does it mean then they saw God? I don't know. But I have to compare Scripture with Scripture. And the fact that we read, no man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

And the Scripture also declares that you cannot see God and live. I must assume that when it declares, and they saw the God of Israel, and this crystal sea, that they saw Him perhaps in a vision form as Isaiah and as Ezekiel and as others saw God in a vision form, but did not actually see God Himself, which is impossible for man to do. No man has seen God at any time.

Moses took the blood and they went out and they saw God. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel, he laid not his hand and they saw God and did eat and drink. That is they fellowshipped with God.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me in the mount and be there and I will give thee tables of stone and the law and commandments which I have written that you may teach them. And so Moses rose up and his minister or his servant Joshua and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Carry ye here for us or wait here for us until we come again to you.

And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you and if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses went up into the mount and the cloud covered the mount and the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai. And the cloud covered it for six days.

And the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud and he got him up into the mount.

And Moses was on the mount for forty days and for forty nights. And while he was there, God gave to him the details for the building of the tabernacle where God would come to meet the people of Israel. The meeting place for God to meet the people.

And God gave him exact and specific dimensions and all for the tabernacle and for the things that were to be in the tabernacle. Now it is interesting as God gives to him the design, he starts not with the tabernacle itself but with the furnishings within the tabernacle. And so in chapter 25 we begin with the materials the things that were to be made to be used in the tabernacle.

And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Speak to the children of Israel that they bring me an offering. Every man that giveth it willingly with his heart shall take my offering. And this is the offering which you shall take of them, gold and silver and brass, blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen, goat's hair, ramskins dyed red, badger skins and acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil and a sweet incense, onyx stones, stones to be set in the ephod and the breastplate, and let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them according to all that I show thee after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it.

So the people were to bring an offering but what was the requirement? They were to bring it willingly. What does the New Testament say about our giving? That it should be every man as he is purposed in his own heart, so let him give for the Lord loves a hilarious giver. The giving is never to be by constraint, never to be by pressure, never to be by deceitful letters.

Man, that upset me. Why? Because God never wants to hear you gripe over what you've given to Him. That's the last thing God wants is to hear you gripe over what you've given.

Now, if someone's pressuring you to give, and you're giving not from your heart but because someone's really laying the pressure on you, you're apt then later on to regret what you've pledged or what you've given. And when you get the little notice, your pledge is due, you know, we haven't heard from you in a month or so, and you know, your pledge is due, and the church is depending upon your pledge, and you think, oh, I've got to write a check, you know, and you're angry with it. Man, that upsets God.

He says, keep it, I don't want it. He doesn't want you to grudge what you give to Him, that's horrible. To give unto God grudgingly or to give unto God out of constraint.

He'd rather you keep it. If you can't give hilariously, then don't give, because if you're going to gripe about it, He's just going to erase the mount anyhow, and you'll never get rewarded for it. God isn't going to take into account the grudging money or the griping money that you've given to Him.

So, if you can't do it hilariously, forget it. Better not to give at all. You'll be much better off not to give at all than to give and then later gripe about it.

Some guy the other day wrote me a letter and said that he was here and was upset because of the fact that he went out to have a smoke and the ushers wouldn't let him back in at the end of the sermon where he wanted to come down and sit with his girl again down in the front row. So, he was really upset because they wouldn't let him back in and all, and he said, I put two dollars in the offering and then they wouldn't let me out. So, I sent him a couple of bucks and I said, you know, sorry about that.

You know, not about the fact that they wouldn't let him in. I was sorry that he had such a bad attitude. And I told him I was just sorry for the attitude that he had and the fact that he was so upset and, you know, didn't want the two bucks.

God surely doesn't need it. And, you know, if he's upset because he gave it, man, better to give it back. If you've given money here and you're upset about what you've given, maybe I've said something that's upset you and you're, oh, why did I give it? That's all right, come to me and you get your money back.

We don't want any griping money for God's kingdom. God doesn't want it and we don't, you know, it's a horrible thing to give to God and then gripe about what you've given. You know, I hate people who say, well, I'll be glad to come over and help you and then they gripe the whole time.

Or they offer to give you something and then you go to take them up on it and they start griping about it. Man, if you don't mean it, don't offer it. I can't stand to have someone give me something and then later gripe about the fact that they gave it.

Whenever I find out, I return it just as quickly as I can. I don't want it. And God doesn't want it.

God loves a hilarious giver. Oh, how God rejoices when he gives. Oh, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity.

Wee, you know. Take this, Lord. It's all yours.

And giving hilariously, oh, God rejoices in that. God blesses that. And you can't give that way, then don't do it.

Now, first of all, he tells them about the ark that is to be in the Holy of Holies, the center place of the tabernacle, the place where they're going to meet God. Now notice God says, Now, to make it after the pattern that I give to you, according to all that I show you, be careful you make it after the pattern. Why? Because the tabernacle is a little model.

It's a model of heaven. If you want to know what heaven looks like and get an idea of heaven, you can look at the tabernacle because it is a model of the heavenly things. So God had them build a little model on earth of what heaven, the throne of God, looks like so that the people will have an idea of what God's throne is like and the place of meeting God.

And so this is a little model. That's why, be careful you make it exactly like you were told. That's why they were to carve the cherubim because there are cherubim there about the throne of God in heaven.

There is the mercy seat before the throne of God. Now, the first thing they were to make was this Ark of the Covenant. And it was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.

And it was to be 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches tall. Sort of a box. Now the lid on the box was called the mercy seat.

They were to make, first of all though, this little box called the Ark of the Covenant. And within the box they were to place the two tables of stone upon which God etched the Ten Commandments. They were to place a jar of manna by which God sustained them in the wilderness.

And they were to place Aaron's rod, the sign of the priesthood being through Aaron, the rod that budded. Those were the three articles that were to go inside of this little box. The lid on the box was called the mercy seat.

It also was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. And then carved on either end of the mercy seat were to be these cherubim carved of solid gold and facing each other with outstretched wings and so forth. And there the cherubims on the lid of the box which is the Ark of the Covenant.

And thus you have a picture of the mercy seat in heaven and the cherubim who are about the throne of God worshiping the Lord. You can read Ezekiel chapter 1, Ezekiel chapter 10, and John, or the book of Revelation actually written by John, chapter 4 to see the heavenly scene of which this earthly tabernacle is just a model of the heavenly scene. And so these were the only furnishings to be in the Holy of Holies, a 15 foot cubicle that was within this tent that they were to make.

Verse 23, the second furniture that they were to make, the second bit of furniture was a table for the showbread. Now this table was to be 36 inches long and 18 inches wide and 27 inches tall with a little crown gold ornamentation around the top of the table. It again was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.

This table was to be a part of the furniture in the outer room. Now as you came into the tent, you had first of all a room that was 15 by 30, which was called the Holy Place. And it was separated with a curtain from

this 15 foot cubicle which was the Holy of Holies.

No one was allowed in the Holy of Holies except the high priest and that just one day a year. Now this little table that they were to make, actually the little box they were to make, they were to put gold rings on each corner and then they were to take these sticks and overlay them with gold and run them through the rings so that whenever they would move and have to carry this ark that the fellows would not touch it but they would pick up the sticks and carry the sticks and it would be carried between four men who were carrying these gold overlaid sticks that ran through these four gold rings that were on the corner of the Ark of the Covenant. Now the same with this table of showbread.

They were also to put the gold rings on it so that the fellows and the sticks that were overlaid with gold stayed through these rings so that whenever they carried it they'd just pick up the sticks and wouldn't actually touch the table. Now this table was to have twelve loaves of bread upon it always and once a week they would change the loaves of bread and these twelve loaves of bread represented actually the twelve tribes of Israel. And there, when the priests would enter this little outer room called the Holy Place fifteen by thirty on his right hand side there would be this little gold overlaid table thirty-six inches long eighteen inches wide twenty-seven inches high with the twelve loaves of bread upon it.

And so he gives the whole thing that we've explained here. Then, on his left hand side as he would enter in there was this golden candlestick made of pure gold and it was of beaten work and it had the center shaft but coming off of it six branches. Now, this is somewhat similar to this except this thing is brass and it is no doubt not as big as the one that was made of pure gold but the idea however, instead of candles in the cups these cups, and they were carved more fancy than this the cups themselves were to be carved like an almond and overlaid kind of a thing like in the shape of an almond and these cups were filled with oil and a wick in them and this candlestick was to be kept burning continually so one of the jobs of the priest was daily to fill these cups with oil to make sure that the candlestick remained burning constantly and it was the light in this tent it formed the light within the tent but it really was a symbol of God's desire for the nation Israel to be the light of the world.

So as the priest would enter into the tent on his right hand side this table with twelve loaves of bread golden table on his left hand side this candlestick with the seven golden cups filled with oil and so forth representing the fact that God intended Israel to be the light of the world. Now you may ask as long as it's a symbol of the tabernacle and Israel to be the light of the world why do we have it in our church? Why don't we have crosses or something here instead of the candle holder? Well, the reason why we have a candle holder here in the church is that the candle holder in the New Testament became a symbol for the presence of Christ within his church. In Revelation chapter 1 John turned to see the voice that spake with him and being turned he saw Christ walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks holding the seven stars in his right hand.

And the Lord spoken to John and said in interpreting for him the vision he said the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. Christ walking in the midst of the churches. And so it is a beautiful symbol of the presence of Christ in the midst of his church.

The living Christ. And though we are grateful and thankful and glory in the cross of Jesus Christ and thank God for it, we do not serve a dead Lord. We serve a risen Savior who is alive and walking in the midst of His church.

And we don't like to think of Him as dead hanging on a cross. We like to think of Him as alive and present with us walking here in our midst in the church ready to minister and to meet whatever needs you might have when you came to church tonight. The risen Lord is here to minister to you and to help you through this week.

And so because it symbolizes the presence of the risen Christ within His church, this is why we have this particular symbol in our church because it means so much to us. I've been asked many times why a menorah in a church and that is the reason why. So again, in verse 40, the Lord said, and look that thou make them after the pattern which was showed thee.

So again, the emphasis, make them just like you saw it because it has to be an exact thing if it's going to be a model of the heavenly. In Hebrews, we are told that the earthly tabernacle was indeed a pattern of heavenly things. So we know a little bit what the throne of God is going to look like as we look at the earthly tabernacle and the things that were in it.

We may move a little faster through the remaining part of Exodus as we will attempt to more or less just give you an overview now rather than thoroughly going into these things. Try to give you a word picture and an overview of these things. It gets a little tedious and a little redundant because it first of all says make it like this and then He turns around in the next few chapters and they made it like this and they repeat the same thing only saying they made it like that and it gets a little redundant.

So rather than getting bogged down, we'll probably move a little more rapidly and just give you a word picture overview so that you can perhaps sort of picture it in your own mind as you think of the tabernacle and you can get a picture of this tent with the two rooms. The first one 30 by 15. The golden table with show bread on the right hand side.

The candlestick on the left hand side and then the altar in the front of the curtain. Behind the curtain, the 15 foot cubicle with this gold overlaid box with a lid which is called the mercy seat with a two carved cherubim on the top where only the high priest would go on the one day in the year the Yom Kippur to make atonement for the nation for their sins once a year. So we'll move along a little more rapidly as we finish off the book of Exodus and pausing only at those places that we feel are significant to us as Christians.

So we stand. Now may the Lord be with you and may the Lord watch over you and keep you in His love and in His grace. May the Lord cause you to abound in every good work for Jesus Christ and may the Lord grant to you new dimensions of relationship with Him that you might become more keenly aware of His presence with you and His power to help you.

May God bless you. May you have just a fruitful, blessed week walking with Jesus Christ.

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