

Exodus 22/23

- We continue studying Law in the section of ordinances, which is chapters 21-23
 - The section concerns the basic civil rights of Jewish society
 - Last time we covered the first chapter and the basic laws of life and property
 - Today we study chapters 22-23, which continue to address property rights, negligence, false testimony, and sundry issues of civil society
 - In fact, as you read through this list, consider that before this law was given to men, the nation of Israel lacked a comprehensive code of this type
 - While it's true that society in general was guided by law of the culture, this document is by far the most complete and ancient record of civil law in existence
 - And since it is God's law, it should be no surprise that modern law finds its roots in this law
 - Although in many ways we have departed from these principles
 - And as we have departed, we have diminished the value of what's provided

Ex. 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

Ex. 22:2 "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account.

Ex. 22:3 "But if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

Ex. 22:4 "If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.

- This section deals with the crimes of theft
 - When someone steals something, he will be required to pay back in a greater amount than he tried to take

- If the animal is gone by the time the man is caught, then he owes 4 or 5 times as much as he took
- If the property is still in his possession, then the penalty is double
- If he can't afford the penalty, he was sold into slavery
 - Remember, slavery was a type in indentured servitude
 - So the person was working in slavery to pay off the debt
 - They wouldn't spend more than seven years in slavery
 - In that way, it was like a work release program
- The point of these penalties is to deter potential thieves from their crimes
 - If you stand to lose more than you gain, then it should influence your thinking
 - This is an important principle in God's law and should be a part of any effective law
 - The purpose of law is to expose and convict people of their sin
 - And to be effective in that regard, law must require a penalty significant enough to cause men to think twice before sinning

[Rom. 13:1](#) Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

[Rom. 13:2](#) Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

[Rom. 13:3](#) For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

[Rom. 13:4](#) for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

- The governing authorities are to be respected, Paul says, because the Lord has invested government with the power to punish
 - In fact, God gave government the right to take life if needed so that bad men might have an incentive to control their worst instincts

- That power should instill fear in men, and in so doing, society is better off
 - Obviously, government can become abusive and corrupt and harmful, because all government is administered by sinful men
 - But God is control of all government rulers
 - And we are told to respect government as a representative of God, at least until it comes into conflict with God's law
- But if government is to play that role effectively, it must exact a price for sin that inhibits such acts
- In this case, the price is pretty steep
 - If you steal, you lose as much as you tried to take
 - If you steal and deny the man the chance to recover his property, you will give at least four times as much
- But then the law goes further to disincentivize theft
 - In v.2 the law says that if the thief is caught breaking into a house in the night and he is caught in the act and killed by the property owner, his killer is guiltless
 - A property owner may defend his property with lethal force when in his home
 - But if the sun rises, and then the thief is caught at a later point, the property owner can't commit vigilante justice
 - The man may not be killed
 - The idea is that one who breaks into a house at night has a reasonable expectation of confronting the owner and presumably intended to harm him
 - So the killing is self-defense, and self-defense is a justified killing
 - In Texas today, we have exactly this same law
 - It's called the Castle Doctrine

- If someone enters a home, they can be killed and the homeowner will not be charged
- The next section addresses property crimes of negligence or malfeasance

[Ex. 22:5](#) “If a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed bare and lets his animal loose so that it grazes in another man’s field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

[Ex. 22:6](#) “If a fire breaks out and spreads to thorn bushes, so that stacked grain or the standing grain or the field itself is consumed, he who started the fire shall surely make restitution.

[Ex. 22:7](#) “If a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep for him and it is stolen from the man’s house, if the thief is caught, he shall pay double.

[Ex. 22:8](#) “If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall appear before the judges, to determine whether he laid his hands on his neighbor’s property.

[Ex. 22:9](#) “For every breach of trust, whether it is for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for clothing, or for any lost thing about which one says, ‘This is it,’ the case of both parties shall come before the judges; he whom the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor.

[Ex. 22:10](#) “If a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep for him, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away while no one is looking,

[Ex. 22:11](#) an oath before the LORD shall be made by the two of them that he has not laid hands on his neighbor’s property; and its owner shall accept it, and he shall not make restitution.

[Ex. 22:12](#) “But if it is actually stolen from him, he shall make restitution to its owner.

[Ex. 22:13](#) “If it is all torn to pieces, let him bring it as evidence; he shall not make restitution for what has been torn to pieces.

[Ex. 22:14](#) “If a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies while its owner is not with it, he shall make full restitution.

[Ex. 22:15](#) “If its owner is with it, he shall not make restitution; if it is hired, it came for its hire.

- In this section, you can see the Lord’s desire to emphasize responsibility, fairness and accountability
 - Men are to uphold their responsibilities to protect another man’s property
 - If you damage his property through negligence or malfeasance, then you make restitution

- But if you are not culpable, then fairness dictates that you suffer no loss
- These principles are best summed up as “love your neighbor as yourself”
 - Jesus said that this is one of the tenets upon which hang the entire Law
 - The Law sought to demonstrate a sense of love for other people
 - While it discusses how to handle theft or loss of farm animals, the same principles are true for any other situation
 - Borrowing a neighbors tools
 - Damaging a neighbor’s fence
 - So when you reflect on Jesus’ words, here in the Law we have tangible examples of what that looks like
- Once again, notice there are consequences for failing to do the right thing under the Law
 - And we know today there are consequences in our nations’ laws for damaging another’s property, etc.
 - But what about our consequences with the Lord?
 - Since Christians are not under the OT Law, how does the Lord respond to us when we don’t show love to our neighbors?
 - Are there consequences for failing to live up to this standard in the Law of Christ?
- In Hebrews, we’re reminded that the Father will discipline His children when we fail to exhibit righteousness

[Heb. 12:5](#) and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

I “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,
NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

[Heb. 12:6](#) FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,

I AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

[Heb. 12:7](#) It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

[Heb. 12:8](#) But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

[Heb. 12:9](#) Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

[Heb. 12:10](#) For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

[Heb. 12:11](#) All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- The writer says as children of God, we must expect to receive His discipline at times
 - If it were otherwise, we would not be His sons truly
 - Just as a stranger cannot discipline another person's child, nor does God discipline those who are not His children
- Discipline is a corrective measure intended to compel obedience and deter future acts of disobedience
 - The unbeliever does not receive discipline
 - Instead, they will receive God's wrath in the day of judgment
- And that writer goes further to say that if believers are determined to disobey the Lord, the penalties under the Law of Christ are significant

[Heb. 10:26](#) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

[Heb. 10:27](#) but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

[Heb. 10:28](#) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

[Heb. 10:29](#) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

[Heb. 10:30](#) For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

[Heb. 10:31](#) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- Willful sinning has remedy in the New Covenant
 - There are no temple sacrifices available to appease God

- We remain exposed to His discipline
- And if the Law handed out a penalty of physical death for the one who violated the lessor Law of Moses, then what should we expect if we insult the Spirit of grace?
 - The writer offers only one thought: the Lord will judge His people
 - And it's a terrifying thing to face His judgment
- While this judgment is not a matter of salvation, it still has consequences and we must concerns ourselves with its outcome

Ex. 22:16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her to be his wife.

Ex. 22:17 "If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.

- Now the laws become increasingly general
 - We move away from crimes against an individual and toward crimes against the society at large
 - In this case, the crime was against another family
 - A daughter who has seduced has been defiled and is no longer considered fit for marriage
 - So in a sense, her father has lost the ability to gain a dowry for her
 - And so he is due a dowry
 - And the man must do the right thing by the woman and marry her
 - Yet the man must still have the father's permission
 - But if the father refuses, then the other man still pays the dowry anyway
 - This law makes abundantly clear that God's expectation is that men and women save their purity for marriage
 - And if that purity is given away before marriage vows are spoken, then the next best thing is to marry the partner

[Ex. 22:18](#) “You shall not allow a sorceress to live.

[Ex. 22:19](#) “Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

[Ex. 22:20](#) “He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed.

- Next, the Lord condemns anyone who practices these particular practices
 - Each of these practices finds its source directly in the occult and the demonic world
 - Practicing black magic or sorcery is channeling the enemy’s power, which demands death
 - Unnatural sexual behavior is an offense to the sanctity of procreation and God’s purposes through it, and is abhorrent
 - Some pagan peoples practiced bestiality in their worship of false gods
 - And sacrificing anything to false gods is worshipping Satan and must be ended
 - In fact, this law provides for a penalty even more severe than it sounds
 - The word for destroyed in Hebrew literally means to be banned
 - It means that the person was untouchable and must be destroyed utterly
 - We see this same judgment applied to the city of Jericho
 - Not only were the people put to death, but everything in the city was to be destroyed
 - Except one of the men disobeyed the ban judgment

[Josh. 7:1](#) But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

- Ban judgment was the command of God for idol worshippers

- These practices were often associated with the worst periods in Israel's history
 - They are barometers of the heart of the people
 - When depravity of this nature is accepted in the culture, it reflects the strength of the enemy's hold and the extent to which the people have abandoned the Lord
 - Therefore, the death penalty is an appropriate punishment to place a restraint on the enemy's influence in the culture

[Ex. 22:21](#) "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

[Ex. 22:22](#) "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.

[Ex. 22:23](#) "If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry;

[Ex. 22:24](#) and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

[Ex. 22:25](#) "If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.

[Ex. 22:26](#) "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets,

[Ex. 22:27](#) for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious.

- These ordinances address the needs of the vulnerable and defenseless in Jewish society
 - A stranger refers to an immigrant or someone who is wandering through the land of Israel
 - This person must receive respect
 - Though he or she might not be Jewish, nonetheless they deserve the respect common to all people
 - And the Lord reminds Israel what it was like to be a wanderer in Egypt and to be oppressed
 - Therefore, don't repeat the sins that were brought against you
 - Widows and orphans must not be oppressed, which means they must be taken advantage of

- Since these groups are defenseless in Jewish society, the Lord promises to be their defender
 - He promises to take the lives of their oppressors so that their wives become widows and their children become orphans
- This law reveals an important principle of scripture concerning our relationship with the Lord
 - He is our defender and will bring justice in His timing and according to His purposes
 - Notice He doesn't promise to prevent oppression of widows and orphans directly
 - They might suffer injustice from time to time, but the Lord promises to be watching
 - And when the injustice takes place, He will respond against the oppressor but in His own timing

[Rom. 12:17](#) Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

[Rom. 12:18](#) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

[Rom. 12:19](#) Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

[Rom. 12:20](#) "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

- Paul taught from the same Biblical principle when he said we should never repay evil with evil
 - And breaking the peace with other men, even with those who harm us, is an evil in God's sight
 - Leave room for the vengeance of God
- If we remain innocent, we give God room to bring judgment
 - But if we break the peace and bring our own sin into the equation, we circumvent the justice of God
 - This doesn't preclude self-defense

- Then in v.25 Israel is commanded not to charge interest of one another when lending money
 - The point was to prevent Israel from profiting from the misfortune of another
 - Interest could be charged of Gentiles however
 - The Jews found a way around the letter of this law through other means, like over charging for goods bought on credit, etc.
 - The heart attitude is the key here: don't take advantage of another person's need
- Likewise, if a man gives up his outer garment as a pledge of repayment, then mercy must be shown
 - That garment was also the man's warmth at night, so he must not be denied it
 - The man denied his cloak would be at the mercy of the other man
 - And he would be in a vulnerable position and could be forced into accepting unreasonable terms
 - The point here is that any unfair advantage that could leave one man enslaved so to speak to another was to be avoided
 - God had freed Israel from slavery
 - So he didn't want the nation to enslave itself one man to another in these way
 - God promises to punish those who take advantage of other Jews in this way
- Finally, injustice against higher stations of Jewish society

[Ex. 22:28](#) "You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

[Ex. 22:29](#) "You shall not delay the offering from your harvest and your vintage. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me.

[Ex. 22:30](#) "You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

[Ex. 22:31](#) "You shall be holy men to Me, therefore you shall not eat any flesh torn to pieces in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

- In v.28, God demands respect for both Himself and for the rulers He places over Israel
 - This law has a direct parallel in the New Testament Law of Christ as well

[1Pet. 2:13](#) Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

[1Pet. 2:14](#) or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

[1Pet. 2:15](#) For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

- The command to respect and obey leaders is not conditional on their worthiness to receive such respect
- The Lord demands it irrespective of their personal behavior, because all human rulers reach their positions of power according to the Lord's will and hand
- He places all rulers into power and they serve according to His purposes
 - Sometimes good rulers enter power and sometimes evil rulers reign
 - And God is working His plan through all of them
 - So if we resist a leader, we are resisting God's will, as Paul said in Romans

[Rom. 13:2](#) Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

- Finally, the Lord reminds Israel to keep the commandment of the first fruits, both of sons and animals and to avoid eating meat torn by a beast
 - These sundry laws continue into chapter 23

[Ex. 23:1](#) "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

[Ex. 23:2](#) "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;

[Ex. 23:3](#) nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute.

[Ex. 23:4](#) "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

[Ex. 23:5](#) “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.

[Ex. 23:6](#) “You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute.

[Ex. 23:7](#) “Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.

[Ex. 23:8](#) “You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

[Ex. 23:9](#) “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.

- The theme in this section is in preserving justice
 - Act in accordance with truth and fairness
 - In repeating the first commandments, the Lord reminds Israel not to bear a false report or perjure oneself
 - And don’t enter into a conspiracy
 - Moreover, don’t follow the masses when they desire to do evil
 - We don’t determine the right path based on it’s popularity
 - In fact, given the sinful nature of flesh, any crowd should be
 - And when judging disputes between men, don’t give an unfair advantage to a poor man simply because he is poor
 - Lost animals are to be returned and animals in distress are to be relieved of the stress
 - And in the spirit of justice, the Lord layers additional regulation on Israel in vs.4-5
 - They are to act in kindness and mercy for the sake of justice even when doing so means coming to the aid of one who is their enemy
 - We cannot use as an excuse for not being merciful the fact that someone has made themselves our enemy
 - In vs.7-9 the Lord once again commands men not to pervert justice by promoting injustice, oppression or by taking innocent life

[Ex. 23:10](#) “You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield,
[Ex. 23:11](#) 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.

[Ex. 23:12](#) “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.

- These verses were a command to give land rest every seventh year
 - This command is explained more fully in Leviticus and repeated in Deuteronomy, and it provides for good husbandry of the land
 - Crops grow better when the land is given a chance to rest and replace the depleted nutrients in the soil
 - Crop rotation is still a practice today, though fertilizers have reduced the need
 - In this case, the purpose was also spiritual
 - Resting on the seventh year is tied to resting on the seventh day
 - The Lord took a Sabbath, as we learned in chapter 20, so He offers Christians the opportunity to enter in His rest by faith
 - In the meantime, the Jews were to observe a shadow in the form of a once a week rest
 - And the land was to participate in that shadow by observing a rest every seventh year
 - How would Israel have food in that seventh year?
 - As with the manna, the Lord would make a double provision available in the sixth year to hold the nation over through the seventh year
 - So no farming would be required in the seventh year
- At a point in Israel’s history, the Jews decided to disobey this law and farm continuously through the seventh year
 - They enjoyed the benefit of having the double sixth year harvest plus still having a seventh year harvest as well

- This was an act of greed and a disobedient act under the law
- This practice went on for 490 years in Israel until the Lord decided to take retribution
 - He declared through Jeremiah that the nation would have to replay Him for the 70 sabbaths they skipped over the 490 years
- So He told them this:

[Jer. 25:9](#) behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

[Jer. 25:10](#) 'Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

[Jer. 25:11](#) 'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

[Jer. 25:12](#) 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

- Then it came to pass in 2 Chr 36

[2Chr. 36:11](#) Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

[2Chr. 36:12](#) He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God; he did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet who spoke for the LORD.

[2Chr. 36:13](#) He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel.

[2Chr. 36:14](#) Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.

[2Chr. 36:15](#) The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place;

[2Chr. 36:16](#) but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy.

[2Chr. 36:17](#) Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand.

[2Chr. 36:18](#) All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon.

[2Chr. 36:19](#) Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles.

[2Chr. 36:20](#) Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,

[2Chr. 36:21](#) to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

- Then we move into basic principles of worship and religious observance

[Ex. 23:13](#) “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.

[Ex. 23:14](#) “Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.

[Ex. 23:15](#) “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.

[Ex. 23:16](#) “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.

[Ex. 23:17](#) “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

[Ex. 23:18](#) “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

[Ex. 23:19](#) “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.

- The section on worship opens with the third warning against idol worship and continues to a discussion of three mandatory festivals all Jewish men must observe
 - The requirement was for adult males age 20 and higher
 - The first feast was Passover and Unleavened Bread
 - They must come with a sacrifice for the Passover, not empty handed

- The second feast was Pentecost or First Fruits or Weeks
- The third is the feast of Tabernacles, which is at the fall harvest
- These three festivals were mandatory for every male Jew
 - It required that they traveled to the Lord's appointed place
 - First it was Shiloh in the early years of Israel
 - Later it becomes Jerusalem under David
- Why were these three festivals mandated?
 - The answer is because of their unique symbolism in God's prophetic plan
 - The feast of Israel are all prophetic shadows of coming events in the program of God's people
 - The Passover and Unleavened Bread picture Christ's sacrifice and the sanctification of the believer made possible by that sacrifice
 - The Feast of Pentecost is a shadow of the coming of the Spirit to God's people and the writing of the Law on their hearts
 - And the Feast of Booths is a shadow of the arrival of Christ at His Second Coming and the inauguration of His Kingdom
 - You may remember at the Transfiguration that the Apostles offered to set up booths for Jesus, Moses and Elijah
 - They thought the Kingdom had arrived, and therefore it was time to set up booths
- The animals used in the sacrifice must be handled in a certain way
 - Sacrifices can't be combined with leavened bread
 - Leaven is a picture of sin
 - For obvious reasons, God doesn't want a sacrifice for sin mixed with a symbol for sin

- These laws are intended to reinforce and preserve the pictures God is intent on creating
 - In passing, doesn't it encourage you to see God working so diligently within Israel to preserve these symbols of His Son?
 - It's so clear that the Lord wanted Israel to become a living symbol of things to come
 - By their very lives, the people of Israel were a living, breathing billboard announcing God's plan of redemption through Christ
 - If you knew how to interpret the signs and symbols embedded within Israel, you could tell the entire Gospel story by these commandments
- As Jesus Himself did to the men on the road to Emmaus

[Luke 24:25](#) And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

[Luke 24:26](#) "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

[Luke 24:27](#) Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

- Secondly, the fat of these animals was to be entirely used up in the sacrifice
 - Nothing was to be withheld from God
 - The sacrifice was total
 - Picturing the way Christ gave up everything for Creation
- Thirdly, the Lord receives the first fruits, the best of the harvest
 - God gets the best, not what we don't want for ourselves
 - Only after the Lord receives what He deserves do we have our portion
 - Picturing the way the Lord gave up His Son first
 - And Christ was resurrected first

- Making Him the first born of creation, Paul says
- Finally, the young goat cannot be boiled in the milk of it's own mother
 - This law is important and is repeated three times in the Law
 - The reason for its importance is that it was a common practice in Canaanite culture to do this very thing
 - A young goat was killed and then it's mother was milked
 - Then the baby goat was boiled in the mother's milk
 - It was an important part of the Canaanite worship practices
 - So the Lord forbids it three times because He knew Israel would be living around Canaanites
 - So He didn't want Israel to engage in any of the Canaanite worship practices
 - Therefore, He specifically forbids this particular type of worship practice
- The rabbis of Israel took this law took far (which was their practice in general) and set up numerous related restrictions to the point of absurdity
 - As a result of these pharisaical rules, observant Jews even to this day will not mix meat and dairy products
 - Cheeseburgers are forbidden to Jews under orthodox rules
 - And orthodox homes will maintain two sets of dishes, pots, and pans
 - One set is only used for meat
 - One set is used for dairy
 - The two are never mixed
 - And if they are mixed accidentally, the dish is buried and never used again
 - This shows the absurdity of men run away with God's law absent a correct understanding of its purpose in developing holiness

- The original purpose was to protect Israel against a Canaanite worship practice
 - It has become a set of unnecessarily restrictive laws that heap burdens on the pious Jew
- As Jesus said

[Matt. 23:2](#) saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;

[Matt. 23:3](#) therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them.

[Matt. 23:4](#) “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.