

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

EXODUS 21-24

This past week I was browsing the internet when I ran across a humorous website, *“The Citizen’s Self-Arrest Form”*. It came with the following instructions...

“If you witness a crime, it is your civic duty to report the crime. When a crime is committed, you have the right and responsibility to make a “Citizen’s Arrest”. Thus, if you commit a crime, you should perform a Citizen’s Self-Arrest.”

You fill out the form... check the box the indicates the crime you committed and your motive – you read yourself your rights... mail the form to the nearest police headquarters – then you stay in your house until the police arrive to arrest you.

If you try to escape, you are to use reasonable force to restrain yourself.

And if you do escape you’re to report it to the police immediately.

There’s even a button on the website you’re suppose to click to confirm that you have successfully arrested yourself... It’s a pretty silly piece of humor.

Yet everyone who tried to live under the Law of Moses was eventually forced to initiate a *“Citizen’s Self-Arrest”*... Rather than make a man righteous, the Law exposes our failures and guilt. It shows what God’s righteousness looks like... how little we measure up... and how desperately we need a Savior.

If you were honest to God you would be forced to initiate a Self-Arrest.

Tonight we're going to look at the Laws God gave the Hebrews...

Chapter 21, "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing." For 400 years, the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt. Now that they're free, God says their first concern should be the kind treatment for the slaves within their own borders. This is how they can appreciate their freedom.

It comes as a shock to some folks that slavery existed in ancient Israel, but it did. And it was usually a way to escape extreme poverty. *It was an ancient version of bankruptcy... If you owed a lot of money you could sell yourself to your creditor and work off the debt. You wouldn't become homeless and he'd get his money.*

Or if you stole from another person, and couldn't make restitution - you could labor for your victim until you had reimbursed him for his losses.

The maximum stint a Hebrew could serve as a slave was six years. In the seventh year he regained his freedom. The fact that a bankruptcy today stays on your record seven years, probably relates back to this ancient law.

Verse 3, "If (the slave) comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall

be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.” It doesn't mean the man can never be reunited with his family – but he'll have to purchase them from their master.

“But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' Often times the masters were so generous and kind to their slaves that at the end of their six year servitude the slave would agree to stay in his master's house, and serve him permanently. The man realized he could do better as a slave in his master's house, than he could do out on his own.

"Then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.” The pierced ear was a sign that the man had become a *love-slave*. He had become a voluntary slave to a merciful master.

In the New Testament Paul refers to himself as “a *bond-slave or love slave for Jesus*”. He discovered that life as a slave of Jesus is far better than life on his own!

Verse 7, "And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do.” A female was never treated as a slave. She came into the master's house as a prospective wife. She was betrothed to her master.

Thus, “If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her.” If for some reason the master didn't

want to go through with the marriage, he couldn't sell her to strangers just because he didn't like her. The family had the right to buy her back.

“And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights.” Unlike today, if a woman fell out of favor with her husband he wasn't allowed to just ditch his wife and marry someone else.

He could take a second wife, but it was his responsibility to provide for them both. And if not... verse 11, **“then she shall go out free, without paying money.”**

Here's the big lesson to glean from these laws...

Other ancient cultures viewed women as a piece of property. You could treat a wife however you pleased. She was totally at the man's mercy. But God mandated in the Law healthy treatment for women. He revolutionized male and female roles.

God was the first champion of women's rights.

In verses 12-13, God differentiates between first degree murder and manslaughter – a legal distinction we hold to even to this day...

“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.” First degree murder deserves a capital punishment... **“However, if he did not lie in wait...”** – in other words, the murder was unplanned or non-premeditated. **“But God delivered him into his hand...”** Say the murder was a crime of

passion, or an accidental death... **“Then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.”**

God differentiates between premeditated, first degree murder - and manslaughter. He assigns a lesser penalty for manslaughter.

Verse 14, **“But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.”** Later in the Law God assigns six cities of refuge where a person guilty of manslaughter could find refuge. But there is no protection for the murderer who premeditates his crime.

Verse 15, **“And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”** Hit a parent and... it would be the last time you ever hit your parents.

At my house, hit one of your parents *and death would be a merciful plight.*

Verse 16, **“He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.”** Kidnaping and extortion were capital crimes.

Verse 17 is another warning to teenagers. Hit your parents – *or harm them with words*, **“And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”**

If you're a teen be thankful you're not under the Law - *but learn from it and show some respect.* God considered respect for parents a serious issue.

"If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted.

He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed." In other words, the person who inflicts a serious injury on another person should cover his back pay and medical expenses.

Verse 20, "And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property."

A slave was considered the property of his owner, but there were limitations to that ownership. If the owner were disciplining his servant, he couldn't get carried away and just kill him. He had rights over his slave, but there were boundaries.

Verse 22, "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine."

The expression, "no harm, no foul" – is not biblical. Just because the baby was born with no complications it doesn't mean the violent act didn't cause the mother to undergo emotional distress... The husband was allowed to collect damages.

“But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Verses 23-25 provide the overarching rule when it comes to the punishment of violent acts – the punishment should fit the crime.

If you take out my eye, then your eye should be removed.

Often we read this as harsh - but this law was really a call for mercy, restraint, and fairness. If you punch me in the eye my natural tendency is not “*eye for eye*”. I’ll not only want to punch you in the eye - I’ll want to kick you in the shins.

Man’s desire is not tit for tat. It’s *to one up* the person who’s harmed us. “**Eye for eye**” was God’s way of tempering our desire for excessive retaliation.

Verse 26, “**If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.**”

If an owner goes too far and physically assaults his slave, he proves he can’t handle the responsibility that goes with possessing servants. Thus, the slave goes free. The slave receives something more valuable than eye or tooth – his freedom.

"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted."

“But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it

confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.” A negligent owner bears responsibility for his violent ox – *or a vicious pit bull.*

Verse 30, “If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him.” The ox’s owner can commute his death sentence by paying damages for the harm the animal caused.

“Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.”

Notice the price of a slave was 30 shekels of silver. This is what made Judas’ betrayal of Jesus so hideous. Matthew 26:15 tells us Judas sold our Lord for 30 pieces of silver – *the price of a slave.* He had very little regard for Jesus’ life.

And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his.” Thus, its disposal is his problem.

"And if one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.”

You read about a man's ox goring another man, and you wonder what in the world does this have to do with me? But these laws are extremely applicable...

They teach us that we're responsible for our property – whether it's an ox, or a pit bull, or an open pit, or a sport's car. People are held accountable not only for the harm they cause, but for the injury caused by the possessions and people under their authority. The intent behind these laws is still applicable today.

Chapter 22, "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep." The thief doesn't just pay for what he stole - he pays damages for the trouble he caused the victim.

"If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed." In other words, if a stranger breaks into my house to steal from me it's my right to protect myself, my family, and my possessions.

Under God's law I can pull out my shotgun and blow him away. *I'll witness to him while the paramedics come.* But we all have the right to self-defense.

But notice in verse 3, if someone breaks into my house one night, and rips me off – the next morning I can't go track him down and shoot him after the fact. We're told, "If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft." Once the immediate danger to my family has passed, I can't then kill him for mere thievery.

Notice too, the emphasis on restitution. If the thief couldn't pay for the damage he caused he was sold as a slave and made to work off the amount he owed.

“If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double.” Again, nothing is said about prison. The emphasis in God's Law was on restitution – repairing damages. The thief had to pay punitive damages in the amount of double to the person he harmed. Today, our courts toss a thief in jail – he loses his ability to work - and the victim never gets compensated.

Verse 5, “If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field (and eats up his green grass), he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double.” Notice too, the amount of damages is specified. It's not left up to the whim of a judge or jury.

“If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods.”

In other words, if he agreed to oversee his neighbor's stuff - and now it turns up missing - the caretaker has a responsibility to his neighbor. It's appropriate that he be

scrutinized to see if he's stolen or mismanaged his neighbor's goods.

This is the first mention of what we might call a *white-collar crime*. Here's a manager who's gone bad, and has embezzled someone else's funds.

Verse 9 establishes the need for tort law. Offences occur that are not criminal crimes, yet justice requires a remedy. Judges are appointed to serve in this role.

"For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor." If the ownership of an article is questioned the parties in the dispute should present their cases, and the judge will decide.

"If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it, then an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept that, and he shall not make it good."

God's law is fair – and acknowledges that accidents happen. A person who was acting in good faith should not be held responsible for a loss that was accidental.

Say you're keeping your neighbor's parakeet, and your cat eats it - *you're not liable*. Your neighbor should've known you had a cat, and was taking a risk.

Verse 12, “But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. If it is torn to pieces by a beast, then he shall bring it as evidence, and he shall not make good what was torn.” You couldn’t help it if a mountain lion saw your neighbor’s poodle in the backyard, and decided to have it for breakfast.

“And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good.” If you borrow your neighbor’s lawn mower, and while in your possession, it breaks down, then it’s your responsibility to have the mower repaired. If you saw it needed repairs and was about to fall a part you shouldn’t have borrowed it in the first place.

“If its owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired, it came for its hire.” If you leased the equipment then your rental fee should pay for the repairs.

Verse 16 is an important law, “If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.”

Notice, just because they have sex doesn’t make them married.

Couples who were living together have told me, “Well, in the eyes of God we’re already married.” I don’t know how you can say that! Here God says you’re not! Verse 16 states clearly you aren’t married until the proper legalities are fulfilled.

In ancient Israel it was the payment of a bridal price. In modern America it’s standing before a pastor, or a justice-of-the-peace, and exchanging vows.

Verse 17, “If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.” In ancient times, each bride came with a dowry. She was a mail order bride. Before you married her you paid her family a bridal price. A virgin bride was more desirable, so she came at a higher price.

In this case, since the young man stole the woman’s virginity then her father had the right to expect him to pay the customary dowry for a virgin bride.

Verses 16-17 teach us that under God’s law there was no such thing as “casual sex”. If a man had sex with a woman, he was expected to marry her, and take over responsibility for her care. Today, men have sex with women and all it costs them is the price of a dinner... And when a girl gives herself to a guy, and she expects little in return it only cheapens her value, and degrades the girl’s own self-worth.

Let me encourage all the single men and women - *never give away your sexuality without a lifetime commitment in return. Wait for marriage...*

The next few verses establish capital crimes. Verse 18, “You shall not permit a sorceress to live. Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.”

In God’s eyes, witchcraft, bestiality, and idolatry warranted the death penalty.

Apparently, people who had sunk to such depths of depravity were a menace to society. The risk they posed to

others wasn't worth the effort to rehabilitate them... In light of the power of Jesus *our* thinking on that is a bit different.

Verse 21, "You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." A good measure of our character is how we treat a stranger. Do we reach out to people who are not like us, *or stick with the clique?*

"You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." God promises to defend the defenseless. God has a special place in his heart for the neediest people. He personally protects the widow and orphan.

"If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest." Don't try to make a buck off a brother who's on hard times. Be kind and generous – not greedy.

"If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in?" Don't take away his only means of staying warm.

"And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious."

Verse 28, "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people." What comes out of your mouth - especially towards

God and the authorities He sets over you is extremely important. And speaking of honoring God, "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices." One of the best ways to honor God is to pay your tithes in a regular and timely manner.

Verse 29, "The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me." The redemption of the firstborn was an offering God required... "Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me." You gave your firstborn to God - then bought them back at a price.

Verse 31, "And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs." In other words, don't eat like a pig – *don't be an animal*. Humans should take the time to prepare their foods in a healthy manner. Cook the meat. Don't just tear into it like an animal and eat it raw.

In our sexuality and consumption humans should be holy – *different than the animals*. "Being a party animal" – is no compliment, as far as God is concerned.

He wants us to be civilized not savage. More like Him, than like a wild animal.

The first 9 verses of chapter 23 discuss *slander, perjury, bribery, and Good Samaritan laws*. The *Sabbath laws*, and *the three annual feasts* in Israel are also highlighted in Exodus 23. We'll discuss them in detail when we get to Leviticus.

Chapter 23, "You shall not circulate a false report." Don't slander. "Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Don't take a bribe, or perjure your testimony. Be a righteous witness. Be a person of your word.

"You shall not follow a crowd to do evil;" Here's a word for teenagers. Develop the strength to go against the flow. Resist the pack mentality – the mob mentality.

Just because everybody else rushes to evil, you don't have to follow the crowd.

"Nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice." Again, be a truthful witness. Don't try to distort or misshape the facts.

"You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute." You shouldn't favor the poor man just because he's poor - any more so, than showing partiality toward a rich man just because he's rich. Don't be guilty of a reverse discrimination.

Verse 4, "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you..."

Here God gives Moses a few practical examples. "If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it." Hey, real love expresses itself in action.

Verse 6, "You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute."

“Keep yourself far from a false matter;” Don’t get caught up in someone else’s sin, “do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked.”

And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove." Not only were the Hebrews to rest every seven days, but they were also to let the land rest every seven years.

In Leviticus God promised His people that their land would yield three times the crop in the sixth year to more than make up for the lack of a harvest in year seven.

It’s interesting that today’s agricultural experts acknowledge the wisdom of God’s Old Testament plan. Today’s methods of crop rotation are based on this principle. Allowing the land to rest replenishes itself of nutrients and minerals.

Verse 12, “Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.” Buck God’s law and you’ll suffer the consequences. Resting one day in seven is not only *holy*, but *healthy*.

“And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.” In other words, be fiercely loyal to the true God. Don’t even mention the gods of the pagans.

Verse 14, “Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year...”

When we study Leviticus we’ll discuss Israel’s seven feasts in-depth - but here God speaks of the three major feasts: *Two spring feasts*: the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Pentecost. *And one fall feast*: the Feast of Tabernacles.

Centuries later, after the construction of the temple in Jerusalem it was during these feasts that all adult Hebrew males were required to worship at the Temple. Three times a year all Israel made the pilgrimage from their home to Jerusalem.

“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty);”

This was the feast that occurred the seven days after the Passover. And of course, Jesus is our Passover. He is what causes death to pass over us.

Verse 16, “And the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field;” Fifty days after the Passover the Hebrews celebrated the Feast of Harvest. The Greeks called it “Pentecost” – which means “fifty”.

The Feast of Harvest was a celebration of the spring harvest in Israel.

It was on that very day that the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jesus' disciples. An outpouring that began the spiritual harvest of souls that continues today.

“And the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year (or at the time of the fall harvest), when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.”

This feast will later be called Tabernacles - in honor of how the shelter the people lived under in the wilderness and the provision God supplied for them.

Ultimately, the Feast of Ingathering speaks of Jesus' second coming – the establishment of God's kingdom - and the re-gathering of Jews to their land.

Verse 17, **“Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD. You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.”**

Notice, God's portion was never the leftovers, but **“the first of the firstfruits”** – the pick of the litter – the very best you had to offer. Hey, God always deserves our *very first* and our *very best*.

Verse 19, **“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.”** In the years following the giving of the Law, this was taken as prohibition against eating meat and dairy products at the same meal. *A kosher Jew will never eat a cheeseburger.*

But there are other interpretations of this verse... Some scholars believe it refers to a pagan ritual, and should be taken as a prohibition against idolatry.

Another interpretation is that a mother's milk was meant to give life – so never use what was intended to give life as a means to take life. A mama's milk should never become broth for a stew. A modern application would be the use of nuclear energy to make bombs - or the employment of intra-uterine technology to perform an abortion. Don't take a life-giving agent and turn it into an instrument of death.

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him."

We glean from other passages that the angel or messenger that traveled with Israel through the wilderness was Jesus. And God's name is in Him. Yahweh is part of the name *Yah-shua*, or *Jesus*. "Jesus" means "Yahweh is salvation."

But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off."

Guys, there are enemies in your life that are standing between you and the good place God has for you. And He wants to cut off those enemies – not the Hivites and Jebusites – but the *Bud lights*, the *skin-tights*, and the *wild nights*.

But you have to obey His voice - and do all that Jesus speaks to you.

In ancient Israel God built a physical kingdom in a geographical location.

Thus, the blessings were physical... military victory over their armies - bread and water - no sickness - no miscarriages, or barrenness – material prosperity.

But today God is building a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men. Thus, the blessings we can expect are spiritual... a life free from sin – the absence of worry, and depression, and spiritual barrenness. God wants us to prosper spiritually.

But there are enemies in our way that will oppose us - the *Friday nights* and *Bud Lights*. God wants to drive out our enemies, so we can enjoy His blessing.

Verse 24, “You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.” There’ll be no compromise with the enemy.

“So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.”

“I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the

beast of the field become too numerous for you.” God promises a quick and decisive victory – and He makes us the same promise. The reason we don’t experience it, is we don’t obey His voice.

I love verse 30. It explains how God works in us His victory, **“Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.”**

God takes on our personal Hittites one at a time. *He conquers the drinking problem - then the temper tantrums - before long the dirty language disappears.*

Little by little we take full possession of the life God wants us to live.

This is why we shouldn’t get impatient. God helps us conquer our habits one at a time. We begin to take possession and live in total victory little by little.

Verse 31, **“And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.”** Israel will eventually inhabit the land from Egypt to the Euphrates. The fulfillment of this promise is still future.

God wants to drive out our enemies little by little - but tragically, we can delay the process. God warns His people in verse 32, **“You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”**

There can be no compromises with the enemy. Don't say, "Oh, let's leave a few Hittites in the hills – or a few Bud Lights in the frig... what's the big deal?"

Hey, God says it's a big deal! Co-existing with the enemy leads you to sin.

You've got to deal ruthlessly with the foreigners – the issues in your life that are foreign to God's will. Try to live with the enemy, and you'll end up a spiritual failure.

In chapter 24 the people once again come to the mountain of God, to accept the terms of the covenant God spelled out to them over the last four chapters.

"Now (God) said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (Aaron's sons), and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him." Everyone but Moses had to keep his distance.

"So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." & Moses wrote all the words of the LORD."

When God speaks His words need to be written down. We should all be glad Moses took the time to place it all on parchment. In fact, we're reading it tonight.

"And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel."

“Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.”

“Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.”

And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.” The blood Moses sprinkled on the altar obligated God to His part in the covenant. The blood sprinkled on the people obligated Israel to the covenant.

John 1:18 tells us, “No one has seen God at any time.”

A little later when Moses asks to see God’s glory, and God hides him in a crack in the rock, and lets Moses see His backside... but any glimpse of God was rare.

Certainly, no one ever looked into God’s face, or saw the full brunt of His glory.

And that’s what makes what happens in verse 9 so special and amazing...

“Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and 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 it was like the very heavens in its clarity.”

It’s ironic, that on the day the Law was confirmed with Israel God demonstrated His grace. He made an exception. He allowed Aaron, his two sons, and the elders onto Mount

Sinai... so that in verse 10 we're told **"they saw the God of Israel..."**

For the next 1500 years - until Jesus comes in human form - no man, apart from the High Priest, will again behold God's glory... *Yet these men see God.*

Perhaps they saw God's backside – maybe they saw Jesus – but in a very real way they were blessed with a rare opportunity to see God and live to tell about it.

Verse 11, **"But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank."** What amazes me is they're in God's presence, but they're so laid back. They're just *chowing down and chilling out.*

And this is revealing... From a distance, God's presence was so awesome and frightening the people trembled. But apparently when they got up close they felt God's warmth, and acceptance, and love – and it set them at ease.

Rather than fear God, they enjoyed being with Him! His presence comforted them. Yes, they revered God, but they were refreshed with God's goodness!

"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." God is going to give Moses two stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments with God's own hand.

Verse 13, **"So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed**

Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." We'll discover in chapter 32, that sadly, Aaron and Hur was not as trustworthy as Moses thought. In Moses' absence there's going to be trouble.

"Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel." Sinai must've resembled an erupting volcano – the smoke and fire emanating from the mountain top.

Verse 18, "So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights."

The remainder of the book of Exodus tells us what happened over the next 40 days and 40 nights – *the glory on the mountain, and the gory in the camp below...*