

EXODUS 34:10-26 (BEHOLD, I AM MAKING A COVENANT)

There is a lot going on in these verses today, and some of them seem entirely disconnected from the other verses, but that really is not the case. The Lord has shown grace to Israel rather than destroying them. Now, He is further refining many of the laws that He previously gave them. He is also repeating, in part or in whole, some of them as well.

At one point in the passage the people are forbidden from making a covenant with the people of the land, sacrificing to their gods, or intermingling with them through marriage. This is actually called harlotry. The reason for this is that in doing any of these things, their hearts will be torn away from worshipping the true God.

The rest of the Old Testament shows us continual violations of this, and the results were exactly as prophesied. We, as a species, have a perverse spot in our hearts where we want to flagrantly disobey God and turn from Him. Edgar Allan Poe would call it "The Imp of the Perverse."

We are prone to doing something which is self-destructive simply because it takes hold of us and impels us to do it. Although his words are large, often difficult, and at times obsolete from our modern tongue, what he says well reflects the attitude we have. Listen to how he describes our often hell-bent nature –

"We stand upon the brink of a precipice. We peer into the abyss -- we grow sick and dizzy. Our first impulse is to shrink from the danger. Unaccountably we remain. By slow degrees our sickness and dizziness and horror become merged in a cloud of unnamable feeling. By gradations, still more imperceptible, this cloud assumes shape, as did the vapor from the bottle out of which arose the genius in the Arabian Nights. But out of this our cloud upon the precipice's edge, there grows into palpability, a shape, far more terrible than any genius or any demon of

a tale, and yet it is but a thought, although a fearful one, and one which chills the very marrow of our bones with the fierceness of the delight of its horror. It is merely the idea of what would be our sensations during the sweeping precipitancy of a fall from such a height. And this fall -- this rushing annihilation -- for the very reason that it involves that one most ghastly and loathsome of all the most ghastly and loathsome images of death and suffering which have ever presented themselves to our imagination -- for this very cause do we now the most vividly desire it. And because our reason violently deters us from the brink, therefore do we the most impetuously approach it. There is no passion in nature so demoniacally impatient, as that of him who, shuddering upon the edge of a precipice, thus meditates a Plunge. To indulge, for a moment, in any attempt at thought, is to be inevitably lost; for reflection but urges us to forbear, and therefore it is, I say, that we cannot. If there be no friendly arm to check us, or if we fail in a sudden effort to prostrate ourselves backward from the abyss, we plunge, and are destroyed."

Poe's character was consumed with the Imp of the Perverse. A thought entered his mind which would surely condemn him if he spoke it, and yet, speak it he did. He tried walking quickly from it, then running, but it over took him. He could no more constrain himself than a balloon could keep from bursting when over-filled.

Poe understood human nature better than almost any. Outside of the Bible itself, I know of no source that peers so deeply into the human soul. We all carry with us the Imp and it will tear us away from what we should most cherish – Life.

But the Bible also gives us a cure from being consumed by the Imp. It is to hide God's word in our heart and to hold fast to it, remembering it, and reciting it. It is the safety for our soul and the protection from the eternal curse...

Text Verse: "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,

With the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

⁶ And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:4-6

Each word of today’s passage is connected because they are given as a safeguard from the onslaught of the Imp. The people are being reminded in law, and the law contains reminders in life. The rite of the firstborn, the calling to the feasts, even not boiling a young goat in its mother’s milk.

It is all given to ward off the Imp and to have the people fix their eyes on the Lord. This is what we are asked to do as well. To “fix our eyes on Jesus,” to “fix our thoughts on Jesus,” and to meditate on God’s laws day and night. These things have value because they will keep us from the Imp, and they will keep us from the Lake of Fire where the Imp calls us from. Our lessons are all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Whose Name is Jealous (verses 10-17)

¹⁰ **And He said: “Behold, I make a covenant.**

The last words of Moses in the previous verse said, “Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.” The words now coming will confirm that this request is granted. Israel will be made into the Lord’s inheritance.

This is implied in the words, *Hinneh anoki koret berit* – “Behold, I am cutting a covenant.” It confirms that the covenant will be worked out. Israel had broken it and it could have been annulled in its entirety. If so, they would have been susceptible to the entire weight of the penalty of death, pictured in the original shedding of the blood of the animals. But they had found grace.

Moses had interceded for the people, and the Lord had relented from fulfilling the terrifying terms of the covenant which they had violated. Now, it is God that makes, or “cuts,” the covenant. It is one sided and therefore, “...if there be quarrels, we must bear all the blame; if there be peace, God must have all the glory” (Joseph Benson).

The action here doesn’t mean that the original covenant is reinstated. Nor does it mean that there is a “new covenant.” The grace of God in forgiving the transgressions of the people “describes rather His future rule as a constant, continuous establishment of a covenant” (Lange).

Therefore, the entire time of His dealing with Israel under this covenant is a transitional phase which will be in anticipation of a New Covenant. This is confirmed many hundreds of years later in the words of Jeremiah –

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. ³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of

them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

The word of the Lord through Jeremiah points back to the covenant which was broken by Israel after being brought out by the Lord. Thus, what is being renewed here is a transitional phase of God’s redemptive workings, and it only anticipates a New Covenant at some point in the future.

^{10 (con’t)} **Before all your people I will do marvels**

The word “before” is *neged*. It gives the idea of right in front of, or in view of all. It is the same word used in the 23rd Psalm when speaking of the Lord’s provision being provided right before the eyes of David’s enemies with the words, “You prepare a table **before** me in the presence of my enemies” (v. 5)

This promise of marvels is said to be before “your people,” meaning the people of Israel. They will personally behold what the Lord will do. In this, it will bring about a two-fold aspect for them to consider.

First, it will be that their faith in God should be strengthened as they see the marvels He does, but it will also actually bring about a more terrifying culpability when the people stray. Having personally seen the work of the Lord, they will thus be more accountable should they reject Him.

^{10 (con’t)} **such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation;**

The words “have been done” here are from a single verb, *bara*. When used in relation to God, it signifies His creative effort. It is the word which was used in Genesis 1:1 concerning the creation of the heavens and the earth. The next time

it will be used in Scripture will be in Numbers 16, confirming the word of the Lord now spoken –

“By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for *I have not done them* of my own will. ²⁹ If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the Lord has not sent me. ³⁰ But if the Lord **creates** a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord.” Numbers 16:28-30

The Lord created a new thing in the destruction of those who rebelled against Him. This is the type of marvel that He would work in and among the people with whom this covenant was being made. Their eyes would behold marvels never before conceived of.

^{10 (con't)} **and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD.**

In verse 9, Moses said to the Lord, “If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, **go among us**, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance.”

The Lord now uses the same term, among, but He contrasts the words “go among us” with “among whom you *are*.” What this means is that Moses is the one who interceded for the people. He is considered the administrator of the law. And so even after his death, it will be recognized that the great marvels of the Lord will be among the people of Moses.

Jesus confirms this thought with words from Matthew 23:2 which say, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.” The law is called the “Law of

Moses.” The authority of the law is called “Moses’s seat.” Thus the great deeds of the Lord will be before “all the people among whom you *are*,” meaning Moses.

Therefore, the “marvels” which are spoken of here are not just constrained to the lifetime of Moses, but they are all the marvels which will occur during the time of the law, culminating in the greatest works of all under the law, those of Christ – to include the fulfillment of the Law of Moses itself.

¹⁰ (con’t) **For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you.**

The word translated here as “awesome” is *yare* – it is a noun which means “fright” or a “terrible act,” but it includes the thought of being placed in a state of fearful reverence. The work which will be accomplished by the Lord will be a terror. It will be a terror to the enemies of Israel, as they are destroyed for the sake of Israel, and it will be a terror to the people of Israel as they are destroyed for violating the covenant which is set before them.

The world will behold the might, power, and majesty of the Lord in both contexts, a work which continues on to this day as He continues to bring the terror which was promised 3500 years ago.

And again, the Lord says that this will be a thing “that I will do with you.” He uses Moses as the cause of the terror which will proceed from the Lord. As I said, this continues on until this day. But how can that be if the Law of Moses is annulled in Christ? It is because Daniel 9:24-27 promises 7 more years to the people of Israel to come into the New Covenant through the work of Christ.

This is why, even to this day, the terror of the Lord as described in these verses applies to all who witness what He will do to and through Israel. When we think of the ultimate terror, that of the Tribulation Period, we can see the immensity of

the words spoken at this time to Moses. He probably had no idea the scope of what he was being told. For Israel, the terror will be realized in its fullness by the words –

“Alas! For that day is great,
So that none is like it;
And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it.” Jeremiah 30:7

For the world at large, the terror will be realized in the words of Revelation –

“Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” Revelation 6:16, 17

¹¹ Observe what I command you this day.

This is spoken to Moses personally. He will be given a set of commands, most of which are positive in nature. The admonition here is to ensure that the people, typified by Moses, were to adhere to the commands. But the Lord doesn’t immediately give the commands. Before doing so, he makes a promise on which the commands are actually dependent...

^{11 (con’t)} Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

These words both form one of the wonders the Lord promises He will do, and they form the basis on which the subsequent commands will be given. He

promises that it will be by His power, not Israel's, that the nations would be driven out. That Israel was used in the process does not negate His having accomplished it. Rather, Israel was a part of His arsenal in making it come about. That this is one of the coming wonders He will perform is seen many years later in the words of David –

“And who *is* like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? ²⁴ For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.” 2 Samuel 7:23, 24

David spoke both of the redemption of the people from Egypt, but also from the nations, meaning many of the nations mentioned here in this verse. The Lord promised He would do this, and He fulfilled His promise. But just as importantly as this, the driving out of these nations is necessary because it will provide Israel the basis for the laws which He will now pronounce...

¹² **Take heed to yourself,**

These words are an imperative. The heart is prone to wander and the flesh is weak. Moses is being instructed now that a positive mindset and action is required in order to keep from failing. And lest we think we are exempted from this while living in the dispensation of grace, Paul warns us in the church otherwise –

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,

but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*." 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13

¹² (con't) **lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.**

The nations of the land were to be driven out for a specific set of reasons. First, they had become so perverse and ungodly that the judgment of God was due them. This is seen in Leviticus 18 –

"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you ²⁷ (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled)." Leviticus 18:26, 27

Secondly, it was promised to Abraham and his chosen descendants. Israel was that select line and the time of the fulfillment of that promise was rapidly approaching –

"Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete." Genesis 15:15, 16

And the third reason is that if they did stay, and Israel made a covenant with them, the Lord now says that such an action would become "a snare in your midst." This is a close repeat of the words of Exodus 23. There it said –

“You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. ³³ 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.”

A covenant with the people would imply a covenant with their gods. Such an action would be sin against the Lord. Making alliances with those who worship other gods will inevitably result in a weakening of the true faith. It is as a snare by which one is caught. It is as if one is walking along, and without even seeing it lying there, they step in it and are set on a path to destruction.

This is the end for all who mingle the true faith with that which is false. Unfortunately, Israel failed to heed. Even today, 3500 years later, they continue to fail in this regard.

¹³ But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images

In Exodus 23, the people were told to break down the sacred pillars of the inhabitants. The Lord adds onto that here. First, they are to destroy their altars. The word *nathats*, or “destroy” is introduced here. It gives the idea of breaking down, and thus to destroy. The Lord had mandated what type of altar was acceptable to use before Him. These were pagan altars which were to be utterly removed from the land.

Next, they were to “break down their *sacred* pillars.” The false gods were identified with the images which represented them. They were to be utterly broken down. They were to be crushed, burned, and left as nothing more than refuse.

It was the practice of conquering forces to take the idols of the vanquished nations and keep them as trophies of victory. However, this was not to be condoned in Israel. They were false, they couldn't save their own people, and they could only entice Israel to eventually look to them for what they could never provide. The wicked king Amaziah actually did exactly this –

Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. ¹⁵ Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, “Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?”

2 Chronicles 25:14, 15

Thirdly, they were to “cut down their wooden images.” These images, or *Asherah* are introduced into Scripture here. They were based on a goddess of the same name found in Phoenicia, Assyria, Canaan, and the like. They will be noted throughout the Old Testament as being worshipped by Israel. Exactly as the Lord warned, they became a snare to the people.

¹⁴ **(for you shall worship no other god,**

Each of these things that was instructed to be broken down was because it represented a false god. Hence the term *ki* or “for” is given. The plural “other gods” of the first commandment is made singular – “...you shall worship no other god.” The Lord is being explicit because the people had already done this on their own, fashioning a false god, erecting an altar to it, and sacrificing to it.

In His hot displeasure, He was prepared to destroy the people. Now, He is explicitly stating that as the people of the land were to be destroyed, so should

their false religious implements be so destroyed. He has promised to take care of the inhabitants, and He expects Israel to take care of what they leave behind. These things served no other purpose but that of false worship and idolatry.

¹⁴ (con't) **for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),**

It is an unpopular set of words for many. People find the thought of jealousy being ascribed to God as something unworthy of His divine nature. But this is absurd for several reasons. First, He claims the title to Himself. Thus challenging the attribute is a challenge against Him.

Secondly, if God was not jealous of Himself and His own honor, it would mean that idolatry was unimportant to Him. If this were true, then it would mean He cared nothing for His creatures. Idolatry includes many moral negatives – adultery, self-flagellation, even human sacrifice.

Thus, it would be contrary to the nature of God for Him to *not* be jealous. Thus, the Lord's name and his character answer one to the other. The Lord's name is *Qanna*, and *el qanna hu* – "A jealous God is He."

Further, in Proverbs 6:34, jealousy is called a husband's fury. This is what is seen here. The covenant between the Lord and the people of Israel was a type of marriage contract. In the worship of other gods, the fury of their Husband, His righteous displeasure, would be brought out of Him.

Finally, this type of jealousy doesn't indicate jealousy of success in another. It speaks of a defense of His honor and glory. When one bows to another god, the Lord isn't jealous of that false god receiving worship. His jealousy is having been deprived of what He is justly due. His words in Isaiah show the thought well -

"I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images." Isaiah 42:8

As Matthew Henry states about this verse, "Those cannot worship God aright, who do not worship him only."

¹⁵ lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice,

The idea of verses 15 & 16 is, "One thing leads to another." If the people were to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, they would then be joined in a familiar way with them. But the Lord has promised to drive them out of the land. A covenant would imply that they receive safe harbor within the land.

This would be contrary to the work of the Lord in expelling them. Now, with their safe harbor, they would continue to "play the harlot" with their gods. This is the first time this word, *zanah*, or harlot, is used in a spiritual sense in the Bible, and it is used of Gentile people in relation to their gods.

The Lord is their Creator too, and yet they sacrifice to that which is not God. In these words, His jealousy is as evident as in that which He proclaims towards Israel. But they are not His redeemed people and so they are to be destroyed. But, with safe harbor, they instead sacrifice to their own gods and they will even invite Israel to join them. The covenant brothers will now be brothers in worship also.

¹⁶ and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

Brothers in worship will inevitably become brothers by blood. The relations will become deeply rooted in family. In joining in marriage, there will be a joining in false worship, and the sons and daughters of Israel would soon “play the harlot” with false gods.

Here the thought of the marriage tie between the Lord and Israel is seen in its full sense. A covenant was made with the Lord, resembling the rite of marriage. Just as when a woman who goes out from her husband to another man is considered adultery (well, it used to be), so is the worship of other gods by the people of the Lord. This is the idea which is conveyed here concerning sacrificing to, and worshipping of, other gods.

It is a lesson Israel failed to heed, and they were swept up in idolatry, from the least even to the greatest. Kings as great as Solomon intermarried, and they left the Lord in order to worship the gods of their wives.

¹⁷ “You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.

This verse ends the long chiasm which started all the way back at verse 32:1. The chiasm opened with an example of idolatry in the making of the golden calf; we have now been given warnings against idolatry in these commands of the re-worked and continually reworking covenant of the Lord. Here as a final warning, He commands explicitly against what they had done by using the words *elohe masekah*, or “molded gods.” The word “molded” was first used when speaking of the molten calf which Aaron made, now it is warned against explicitly in any type, shape, or form. No.molded.gods!

*I am a God of grace, longsuffering and kind
I am a God of mercy, forgiving transgression and sin
But I am a jealous God; to harlotry I am not blind
And in your harlotry, you will find yourself done in*

*If you go a-whoring after other gods, away from Me
Your heart will be led completely astray
My fury will rise against you, most assuredly
And I will destroy you and your wicked way*

*Cling to Me! Let Me be your only God
Follow Me and I will give you life and love
Pursue Me always in this life you tread
And I will shower you with blessings, yes blessings from above*

II. Close Fellowship With the Lord (verses 18-26)

¹⁸ “The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

In what seems an abrupt change in commands, a feast of the Lord is suddenly introduced. It will be followed up with the other two pilgrim feasts. There is actually nothing abrupt about this. Rather, it is a logical progression of thought. The people are warned against idolatry, and then they are admonished to keep the precepts which acknowledged them as the people of the Lord.

As the Lord's people, they would fellowship with Him intimately through these feasts. Instead of sacrificing to other gods, they would be sacrificing to Him. One must ask why, though, the double feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is simply called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The reason is that they had been redeemed. The Passover, though observed annually, was commemorative in nature. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was instructive in nature. It signified being separated from the heathen world. They were to commemorate this annually to show their set-apart status. Every year at *ha'aviv*, or the time of fresh young ears of grain, they were to observe the feast.

¹⁹ “All that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep.

The term *peter* or “open” was introduced into the Bible in Exodus 13. It was used 5 times where the “Law of the Firstborn” was given in great detail. Now it is mentioned again, three times in verses 19 & 20. As this mandate was given before the giving of the law, it is now brought into the law itself. It is not an option, but rather a command which must be adhered to.

This claim on the firstborn is an assertion by the Lord that all born to Israel – man or beast - were His, but the firstborn was taken as representative of that fact. The people were set apart to Him and the clean animals were His.

²⁰ But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him*, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.

The donkey is representative of all unclean animals. They were not to be offered to the Lord, and so they had to either be redeemed by a clean animal, or they

were to be killed. A picture is made here. The donkey, symbolic of unclean Gentiles, was to be redeemed with a lamb or have its neck broken. In picture, the Gentile had never been redeemed by Christ. Instead, his neck remained turned in defiance to Him. This is why the breaking of the neck is chosen.

Human sacrifice was unacceptable, and so all human sons of Israel were required to be redeemed.

²⁰ (con't) **"And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.**

The word "empty-handed" is *reqam*. It gives the sense of something being vain. The word was used in Exodus 3:21 when the Lord promised that Israel would not come out of Egypt empty-handed -

"So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go **empty-handed.**" Exodus 3:20, 21

The intent here is that, "Just as I brought you out of Egypt with hands that were not empty, so you shall come before Me with hands that are not empty. To do so would be a vain thing." The Lord provided for Israel; Israel was to acknowledge that.

²¹ **"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest;**

The mandate of the Sabbath rest has already been seen at the time of the giving of Manna in Exodus 16. It was brought in as the fourth of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. It was reiterated in the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 23. And it

was again given as an appendix in the directions for the construction of the Sanctuary in Exodus 31. It is given again now for the following reason which is tied into the annual harvest feasts...

²¹ (con't) **in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.**

The word *kharish*, or “plowing” is rather rare, being used only three times in the Bible. Normally the Bible speaks of seedtime and harvest, but here it speaks of plowing. This is set in contrast to reaping then. The times where hard physical work was required, it was still to be stopped on each Sabbath day.

This is especially so because if the weather was bad all week, these tasks may have been urgently needed. However, the Lord may provide a marvelously beautiful day on the Sabbath. The obvious thought might be, “The Lord has given us this beautiful day to plow so that we will be fruitful.” But rather, they are being told now that this was not the case. The Sabbath was not to be violated.

²² **“And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest,**

Khag Shavuot, or the “Feast of Weeks,” gets its name from a seven-week period which started at the bringing of the Firstfruits to the Lord. This is detailed in Leviticus 23:10, 11. In Exodus 23, this same feast was call *ha’qatsiyir*, or “the harvest.” The feast in Greek and in the New Testament is called “Pentecost” meaning “fiftieth.”

This grain harvest, which began fifty days earlier, was now considered finished. As the feast of harvest, it was a celebration of the blessing of labor in the field.

²² (con't) **and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.**

Khag ha'asiph, or Feast [of] the Ingathering is the final of the three mandatory pilgrim feasts. It is only called it by this name here and Exodus 23:16. When the feast is mentioned elsewhere, it is called Sukkoth, or Tabernacles. It is referring to the ending of the harvest season when the labors of the people are gathered in from the field.

The dating for this feast will later be fixed as the 15th day of the seventh month and it will last for seven days. This corresponds to around October on our calendar. There are various crops that grow in Israel throughout the summer months and by this time, they are almost all harvested.

Generally, the last crops to be gathered in are the grapes, figs, pomegranates, almonds, and olives. At the time when these harvests were accomplished, the people were to celebrate this feast of their labors, as it says "at the year's end."

The Hebrew term for "end" here is *tequphah*. It is a noun used for the first of just four times. It means a coming round or circuit, and it comes from the verb *naqaph* - to circle or go around. At this point of turning, the cycle of the agricultural life they lived would be ready to start once again.

²³ **"Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel.**

This verse is almost a repeat of Exodus 23:17. The only difference is that it includes the words *elohe yisrael* or "the God of Israel" at the end of it. The Lord Yehovah is specifically said to be "the Lord Yehovah, the God of Israel."

24 For I will cast out the nations before you

The Lord has promised to do this, though the people did not fully obey the Lord concerning making covenants with the inhabitants, nor did they fully obey in driving out all of the people, the nations were essentially driven out from the land. Israel ruled the land of Canaan as was originally promised to Abraham in Genesis 12.

24 (con't) and enlarge your borders;

Later in Genesis 15, the Lord promised Abraham an enlargement of the borders originally promised. That is repeated now, and it was fulfilled at the time of David and leading into the rule of Solomon. Though they only possessed this larger expanse of land for a short time, the promise was fulfilled.

24 (con't) neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year

These words are found nowhere else in Scripture, but they are so memorable that no other recording of them is needed. Even though every male of Israel was to present himself before the Lord, leaving every city and town with only women and children, the Lord made a promise that they would never need to fear during these feasts, even with no protection at all in a country larger than the state of New Jersey. With its increased borders at the time of Solomon, it was far, far larger than that. It is an amazing promise, but it was a promise based on the obedience of the people.

²⁵ "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.

With but a few differences, this verse is almost the same as Exodus 23:18. In both verses, the blood is the object of what is offered instead of the sacrifice - "You shall not offer the blood." As the Bible says that the life is in the blood, and because grain offerings were considered separate offerings than sacrifices, it is referring only to the Passover, which is a type of Christ's cross. Thus it is called, "My sacrifice."

Leaven was to be completely purged from the home prior to the slaughtering of the Passover. Thus it is a picture of the sinless Christ who shed His blood for us. There was no sin to be found in Him, just as there was no leaven to be found in the homes of those who partook of the Passover. There was to be nothing left of the lamb by morning time. This was explained in Exodus 12 -

"You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire." Exodus 12:10

***²⁶ "The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."**

Verse 26 is identical to Exodus 23:19, word for word. For that reason, I'll send you there either via my written sermon, or YouTube for you to get all of the exciting details. Suffice it to say that every word of this verse points to the work of Christ. His resurrection, and all the way through to the end times.

In fact, each of the precepts that we have looked at today picture Christ intimately. If you missed those previous sermons, go back and watch them to get a full appreciation for all that is entailed in them. There is truly marvel to be seen

in how Christ is so beautifully revealed. Today, I simply took the time to highlight the changes from previous passages, and to explain any additions. But be sure that it is all about Christ.

The Old Testament was given to show us what lay ahead in Him. Without Him, we are all lost. We follow the Imp of the Perverse and we turn our hearts away from God, but with Christ, we are given the ability to focus our thoughts anew and to redirect our hearts and our lives to a state which God finds good and pleasing.

And it is all based on our faith and His grace. If you have never received the good news of Jesus Christ, please do it today. He died so that we can live. Through the blood of His cross, we are reconciled to God and brought near to Him once again.

Closing Verse: “Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. ²⁴For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.” Deuteronomy 4:23, 24

Next Week: Exodus 34:27-35 *Don't think this title at all odd...* (The Refulgency of God) (96th Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Covenant Continues

And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant
Before all your people, of every station
I will do marvels such as have not been done
In all the earth, nor in any nation
And all the people among whom you are
Shall see the work of the Lord
For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you
The guarantee is my word

Observe what I command you this day
Behold, I am driving out from before you, as I determine is right
The Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite
And the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite
Take heed to yourself
Lest a covenant with the inhabitants you make
Of the land where you are going
Lest it be a snare in your midst, this warning do take

But you shall destroy their altars
Break their sacred pillars too
And cut down their wooden images
For no other god shall be worshipped by you

For the Lord, whose name is Jealous
Is a jealous God, and for His name He is zealous
Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land
And they play the harlot with their gods, a terrible vice
And make sacrifice to their gods
And one of them invites you, and you eat of his sacrifice

And you take of his daughters for your sons
And his daughters the harlot with their gods play
And make your sons play the harlot with their gods
You shall make no molded gods for yourselves; this you shall obey
The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep
Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread
As I commanded you
In the appointed time of the month of Abib; just as I have said

For in the month of Abib out from Egypt you came
And so the nations heard of my great name
All that open the womb are Mine
And every male firstborn among your livestock
Whether ox or sheep
Animals of the herd or of the flock
But the firstborn of a donkey
You shall redeem with a lamb for My name's sake

And if you will not redeem him
Then his neck you shall break
All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem, I have commanded
And none shall appear before Me empty-handed
Six days you shall work
But on the seventh day you shall rest
In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest
Do not disobey and thus put me to the test
And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks
Of the firstfruits of the harvest of wheat
And the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end
When the harvest cycle is complete

Three times in the year all your men
Shall appear before the Lord
The Lord God of Israel
This according to my word
For I will cast out the nations before you, so understand
And enlarge your borders, so will it be – have no fear
Neither will any man covet your land
When you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year
You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven
This I state to you as a warning
Nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover

Be left until morning

The first of the firstfruits of your land

You shall bring to the house of the Lord your God

You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk

You shall not so defile the land upon which you trod

Lord God, You gave good laws to Israel

But as a people, they failed You time after time

They turned their necks to you, and raised their fists as well

But through it all, You have claimed, "This people is Mine"

And the people of Your church have likewise turned away

We have shunned Your grace and gone after works of our own

But still You hold out nailed-scarred hands, even to this day

Great mercies to Your wayward people you have shown

Help us Lord to turn our hearts to You

Help us to be like Christ, ever faithful and true

And as we walk upon this world, let us ever give You praise

Yes, for the duration of our lives, whatever number be our days

For You are worthy, O God – Yes, faithful and true

And so we shall in heaven's majestic home, ever be praising You

Hallelujah and Amen...