

**Message #45****Exodus 23:20-33**

When you start out in life, you have no idea as to where you will end up. Life is a big adventure and it sure is a big adventure when you have a relationship with God.

Now let's remember what has happened to Israel in a relatively short period of time. God has taken her out of Egypt and led her to a mountain in the Sinai Peninsula and He starts giving her a series of laws that were overwhelming.

Israel has no idea where she is heading. She has no idea as to the adventure that lies before her and she also has no idea about the dangers she would face. But God knew about all of this and he wanted her to know this very simple principle that is applicable to any dispensation for the people of God.

**IF GOD'S PEOPLE CHOOSE TO OBEY GOD'S WORD, GOD WILL DO  
WONDERFUL THINGS FOR HIS PEOPLE.**

This is as simple as it gets. It does not matter who we are, without God we are nothing and without God we will accomplish nothing. However, with God we may fulfill everything God wants us to fulfill. If we will purpose to obey God's Word, we will see God do some amazing things.

Now there are four main realities that God wanted His people to know as they got started:

**REALITY #1** – God was going to send His angel to guard and lead His people. **23:20**

Now this first reality is important. God was going to send His angel before His people. That angel would guard them and lead them and bring them to the place God wanted. Notice He would go "before" them, not just along with them.

Now this angel is none other than the "angel of the LORD," who is none other than Jesus Christ. We do know that Jesus Christ was intimately connected to these very events of Israel (I Cor. 10:4, 9-10).

So God is promising that His angel, who is specifically Jesus Christ, is going to protect them and lead them. Just think of this. **It is possible to actually have Jesus Christ as your Personal guide through life.**

In fact, it is interesting that when Jesus was here, He specifically said that he had protected and guarded His own and not one of His own perished (John 17:12).

This is a great motivation for obeying the Word of God. When we choose to obey the Word of God, we have the personal protection and the guidance of God.

**REALITY #2** – God’s people need to obey His angel and not rebel against Him. **23:21**

Now God tells His people that they need to guard themselves before Him and obey Him and not rebel against Him and His Word because this angel is God and He will not pardon your transgressions.

Now what this would actually mean in this context is that if Israel did not obey God, God would not just overlook this and pour out His blessings on this nation. He would not do the wonderful things He promises to do if she would not obey Him.

It is clear that this angel does have the ability to “pardon transgressions.” But God warns that if they wanted to enjoy the blessings and the benefits of His presence, they needed to obey and not rebel.

No one in his right mind can expect the blessings of God and the benefits of God if they are going to live in rebellion against God and His Word.

**REALITY #3** – God will do wonderful things for His people if they obey Him. **23:22-33**

There are four main statements that God makes to His people about what He will do if His people obey Him. These guarantees are only operative if His people obey Him:

**Statement #1** - If God’s people obey God, His people’s enemies will be His enemies. **23:22**

Think about this for a moment. If God’s people obey Him, then their enemies become God’s enemies. If you are obeying God, leave your enemies to God because He will take care of every one of them.

Now at this point, Israel had no way of knowing who all her enemies would be anymore than we can know who all our enemies will be. But it doesn’t matter who or what the enemy, as long as we are obeying God’s Word, He fights for us.

**Statement #2** - If God’s people obey God, His angel will bring Israel to her land and destroy all enemies living in the land. **23:23**

The six groups mentioned in this verse are a representative of various “sub groups” who lived in the Promised Land, who were broadly called “Canaanites.”

The Canaanites were the dominant group of people who controlled the Promised Land that God was going to give to Israel.

Now the promise of God is that if Israel would obey the Word, He would “completely destroy” these people and rout them out of the land. Obviously something has gone wrong, because Israel has never lived in the land out from under the threat of various land intruders, who still are in it.

In fact, right in Jerusalem today is the hellish Muslim shrine the Dome of the Rock, that is a demonic religion that has no business being in that land anywhere.

So what we literally see today is Israel does have a Promised Land, but He has not “completely destroyed” all the enemies who are in the land.

Why? How come it is He hasn't run those Arab Muslims right out of every inch of Israel? The reason is because Israel has rejected God's Word and rejected God's Son.

**Statement #3** - God's people are not to worship false gods but destroy them. **23:24**

This is a key demand of God. God keeps repeating do not worship some false deity. This was the first of the Ten Commandments and God has brought this up multiple times. Why? This was a big threat to Israel and God knew it.

It is clear that Israel has not kept her focus on worshipping the true God of the Bible. What God wanted was this. Once Israel got into the Promised Land, He wanted to be worshipped and he also wanted the people to completely destroy their idols and places of worship.

The sacred stones or pillars of the Canaanites were something God wanted removed from His land. He did not want them moved, He wanted them destroyed.

**Statement #4** - If God's people serve the Lord, He will bless His people in many ways.  
**23:25-31**

When God's people would finally get to the Promised Land, if they would obey Him and serve Him and worship Him according to His Word, He promised that He would bless Israel in eight specific ways. These would be real incentives for obeying God:

**(Way #1)** - His people will have an abundance of food and drink. **23:25a**

In other words, Israel would have plenty to eat and drink.

**(Way #2)** - His people will not experience sickness. **23:25b**

God is actually promising to Israel as a nation that if she will obey Him, He would remove sickness from her midst. In other words, He would grant health to everyone.

**(Way #3)** - His people will not miscarry. **23:26a**

Children would be born healthy and would grow up in a healthy environment.

**(Way #4)** - His people will not be barren in the land. **23:26b**

What this means is that when Israel got into the land she would be fruitful.

**(Way #5)** - His people will fulfill the number of their days. **23:26c**

In other words, God would not cut short the life of anyone and all would live to a full and fulfilling life.

Now one thing is very clear from these first five things listed and that is it is possible to experience many physical blessings of God before we die if we obey God.

**(Way #6)** - God will send confusion to all enemies and they will run from His people. **23:27**

God would fight for His people if they were faithful to Him. He would direct His people to outwit and outsmart their enemies and He would cause them to be afraid and would even confuse their plans. He would put them into the land of Israel and would make it their land.

**(Way #7)** - God will send hornets to drive out all enemies, not at the same time. **23:28-30**

God's principle of development is "little by little." God develops us little by little, not all at once. He wants us always growing and depending on Him all the way through life.

God would not drive them out all at once so that the land would not become desolate. God would drive out the enemies little by little until they are completely eliminated.

As this text says, God uses terror and fear, confusion and helplessness, defeat in battles and He will use insects to defeat Israel's enemies.

I believe there are enemies within a church and God typically does not remove them all at once. He does it little by little.

**(Way #8)** - God would give Israel the totality of the Promised Land. **23:31**

Now gaze your eyes on this verse—the Promised Land dimensions run from the Red Sea and Nile River area to the Mediterranean (sea of the Philistines) to the Euphrates River. This completely coincides with the land boundaries God promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18).

Israel has never had the totality of this land. When will she have it? The day is still in the future. She did not obey God and she rejected His Word and she rejected His Son.

**REALITY #4** – God’s people are not to enter into any covenant relationship with any other people because they will cause the people to sin against Him. **23:32-33**

Again God warns do not get into fellowship with these people and their false deities. God does not want them in the Promised Land because those people would make them sin against Him.

When God’s people obey the Word, they have a lot to gain. When they don’t, they have a lot to lose.

**GREAT LESSONS TO LEARN:**

- 1. God will guide us all the way through life if we will purpose to obey Him.**
- 2. God will give us many material blessings in life if we will purpose to obey Him.**
- 3. God will give us victory over many enemies in life if we will purpose to obey Him.**
- 4. Life is a journey and obedience to God is the key to a great journey.**