

Friday, September 30, 2022 • Read Exodus 23:20–33

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom would God send where (v20)? To do what two things? What two things were they to do with Him (v21)? What were they not to do? Why, what wouldn't He do? What would be in Him? In what things were they to obey His voice (v22)? If Israel did, what would God do to whom? What six enemies does He specifically mention doing this to in v23? What will He do (end of v23)? What three things mustn't Israel do like them (v24)? What two things must they do to them? What must they do to Yahweh (v25)? Who is Yahweh to them? What five things will He do for them as their God (v25–26)? What else will God send before them (v27)? What two things will this do to their enemies? What else will He send (v28)? What three peoples does He say they will drive out? How long will this take, and why (v29–30)? Where will their borders be (v31)? What aren't they do with whom (v32)? What aren't they to let them do (v33)? Why not? If they are permitted to remain, what will the result be?

What will the covenant relationship between Yahweh and this new church-nation be like? Exodus 23:20–33 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these fourteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God Himself will lead them, God Himself will bless them, and God Himself will establish them.**

God Himself will lead them, v20–24. The Angel that goes before them is not something new. We have already read about Yahweh going before them in 13:21, specifically as this Angel in 14:19, as Whom Yahweh first appeared as flame in 3:2. On this side of the incarnation, it is much easier for us to understand that this Angel (Messenger/Herald) is a Christophany, a theophany of the second person of the Trinity.

But even here, we see that He has all authority and power, and even the identity of God Himself in Him (v21). This of course is bad news for their enemies, but if they do not obey Him it will be equally bad news for them. Our God is still a consuming fire, and it is not safe to rebel against Him or take Him lightly.

God Himself will bless them, v25–26. In their covenant with Yahweh, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, every detail of life will come not as chance but as covenant blessing. Every detail will be personal, covenantal benefit. Bread. Water. Health. Fertility. Length of life. These will be tokens of His favor. Similarly for believers, every little blessing in life comes in the love that gave us Christ and is to be received that way (cf. Rom 8:32). Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from a Father Whose light smiles upon us with unrelenting intensity (cf. Jam 1:17).

God Himself will establish them, v27–32. God is in complete control here. Although they are expected to express their fidelity by destroying and shattering all vestiges of the religions of the people of the land (v24), the Lord Himself will do much of the dispossessing of the land. He is sovereign over men's hearts (v27) and many hornets (v28)—even to the point of controlling the pace at which they are driven out (v29–30).

The fidelity to Yahweh commanded in the shattering of all idol paraphernalia in v24 is paralleled by the duty to drive them out completely in v31–33. The difficulty will be willingness, not ability; Yahweh says, "I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand." As God establishes their strength, they are to guard against their own tendency to unfaithfulness. This remains true for God's people today. As He works in us to will and to work according to His good pleasure, we are to be working out our own salvation with fear and trembling (cf. Php 2:12–13).

How are you taking confidence and comfort from being led by God? How are you navigating the risks and dangers of negligence or resistance to His direction? How are you recognizing and responding to every blessing in life as a covenant blessing from Him? What are you doing to cut out of your life influences that tempt your heart to dependence upon, devotion to, or delight in something apart from the Lord?

Sample prayer: Lord, You are our Shepherd. You have laid down Your life for us, and You lead us through our lives. Grant to us to walk by faith in You, believing all that You say, obeying all that You command, and taking all of our delight in You. Guard us from all that would hinder this we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP23B "The Lord's My Shepherd" or TPH78 "O My People, Hear My Teaching"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 23 verses 20 through 33. These are God's words, 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, 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 efforts adversaries.

My angel will go before you and bring you into the Amorites and the Hittites and the parrotsites and the Kanaianites and the hivites and the Jebusites and I will cut them off. You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them nor do according to their works, Put your solitarily overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.

So you shall serve Yahweh, 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 a number of your days. I will send my fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come.

And we'll make all your enemies turn their backs to you. I will send hornets before you which I'll 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 does looked and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you little by little I will drive them out from before you until you have increased and you inherit the land.

Now we'll set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea Philistia. And from the desert to the river, fry will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand and you shall drive them out before you, 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.

So for the reading of God's inspired and and they're into art,

So, in verse 19 last time and in Exodus, we finished, what is called the, the book of the Covenant, especially with the reminder that the rhythm of every day, the rhythm of every week, the rhythm of every year, the rhythm of their whole lives was to remind them, that they belong to the Lord and no other that, they are consecrated as holy unto him.

And that he himself is all of the blessedness of every blessing that they have that there's no joy apart from him.

And now he tells them that he himself is going to be the one who leads them through the wilderness. They? Of course did not make good application of this. These things came upon them. Says, first Corinthians 10 but that were written down for us up on whom the ends of the ages of come.

Hebrews, three and four. In teaching, why a Sabbath-keeping remains for us God's people who have not yet ceased from our works actually uses this generation as the generation who didn't listen to what God told them as a reminder that we should listen. And so, what a wonderful blessing. It is if we read verses 20 through 33 and the light of what God has just told us in verses 10 through 19, that it's he himself through it lead Israel, and if they had responded with faith, they would have thought all how wonderful we get to go through this wilderness and then how wonderful we get to enter the land of kit Canaan.

Where the Amorites, the giants are because it is, the Lord himself will leads us through this wilderness. And as the Lord Himself, who takes us unto the land of the Amorites and the Lord himself. It drives out the Amorites, this Lord who is consecrated us to himself as holy This Lord who has made himself our blessedness.

We get to walk with Him but we're too often like ASAP and Psalm 73 to our forgetful of God and look around instead at circumstances and that people and are like beasts towards him and say in vain have I kept my hands clean. But you remember what ASAP said when the Lord mercifully brought him to his sanctuary and he said, this is the way I thought until I came to your holiness until like aimed to your sanctuary, it held your glory truly you set them in slippery spaces, etc.

And he talks about how awful it would be to be like those whom he was just envying for the first half of the psalm. And then he says, nevertheless, I am continually with you. You take me by the hand, you guide me by your counsel and afterward you will receive me into glory.

Whom have I in heaven, but you and there's nothing else I could desire on earth beside you. We're familiar with the rest of the Psalm. So this is an amazing passage at the conclusion of the book of the Covenant. And now he's about to tell them is about to give them instructions for embarking on the journey, and they're going to be a lot of details because there's gonna be a tabernacle.

And the tabernacle, where the glory of the Lord will dwell and the Lord who goes in front of them and hovers above them. And he talks about his angel behold. I send an angel, but the angel, the messenger, the sent one is also God. It says obey his voice.

Do not provoke Him. He will not pardon your transgressions for my name isn't him. And as the as a Pharisees, the scribes rightly say, who can forgive sin. But God alone. Well, he is God. He says if you obey His voice do all I speak I will be an enemy to your enemies and adversary to your adversaries.

It says in verse 25 so you should all serve Yahweh. Your God and he will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. I will fulfill the number of your days. Verse 26 all, which is Yahweh that he or the eye, that's both isn't it.

The fact that God is one God, and three persons is true throughout the whole Scripture and this angel that has been going before them Ever since. They left Egypt, back in 13, and verse 21. You always went before them day by day and a pillar of cloud to lead the way.

But then he says in the next chapter in chapter 14 and verse 19, and the angel of God who went before the camp of Israel moved. Which one is just going in front of Israel. Is it your way or is it? The angel of Yahweh. Oh, the answer is it's Yahweh.

Who is the angel of Yahweh? Moses has known this since chapter 3.

Remember at the bush.

Chapter 3 verse 2, the angel of Yahwe appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of the bush. So when you always saw that, he had turned aside to look God, called to him from the midst of the bush. Verse 4 was it God? Or is it the angel of Yahweh was both?

You see the Lord? Jesus. When he takes on human flesh, when he actually becomes a man, as Ephesians 4 puts it descends, into the lower parts of the earth, using the language of the womb. From Psalm 139, one of his names as Emmanuel God with us. And when John 1 talks about the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, so uses a word for dwell that comes from the word for tent, which is in the Greek copies of their Old Testaments.

The word for the tabernacle a tabernacle among us and at the end, when there is the glorious presence of God and the lamp, the great announcement and Revelation 21. Behold the dwelling place of God is with, man, This is an extraordinary promise with which verse 20 begins Behold. I send an angel before you to keep you in the way God himself will lead them.

Now, this is very dangerous for their enemies. I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries verse 22. But it's also very dangerous to anyone who draws near without reverencing godness are. So we'll find out not too many chapters from now on, Leviticus chapter, 10 and Nadab and a buy here or incinerated from fire that by fire.

That comes from the presence of God, the mercy seat on the tabernacle and Moses says to Aaron last. Aaron Grieve and himself. Come under condemnation. Isn't this what God has said by those who draw near to me? I will be hallowed. I will be revered. And so, he tells but send an angel before you beware of him and obey his voice and do not provoke him.

Oh, how dreadful? For those who say they trust in Jesus, but do not do things the way of Jesus. They give the lie to their supposed faith, they trust in themselves and their ideas of that Jesus. But one, their ideas. Go separate from Jesus's ways. They go with their ideas.

And so they are as it were those before. Whom is the angel of Yahweh and yet They do not obey his voice and they provoke him. God himself will lead them. God Himself will bless them not just in great blessings. As we'll see in a moment in the Lord's establishing them in verses 27 through 32 but look at verses 25 and 26.

So you shall serve Yahwe your God and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you that one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days. So very ordinary requests, aren't they?

It's not much, that's more ordinary than bread and water being healthy. Getting over your illness. It's not much more. Not much more ordinary every day life when the mom or the wife is pregnant every day as you ask for Brad and ask for blessing upon your meals. You always remember the baby?

You always remember the mommy. So forth. He is the one who give you a full life, fulfill the number of your days. So it's very personal. The blessing of God is every blessing, when you belong to God is personal blessing from God,

To use the language that so many in their ignorance use you could say, while not today because of the fasting. But tomorrow, and get up. And you have your breakfast. You could say it was a god thing I had toast, the fill your water bottle, it was a god thing.

I had a sip of water from my bottle, because if you belong to him through Jesus Christ, He is with you to bless you in every small thing. Every tiniest detail of your life. It's the Lord personally with you, please with you for Christ's sake, pleased with you in that, love that he set up on you.

That was the reason he gave Christ for you to begin with now, giving you bread. Now, giving you a sip of water from your bottle Now helping you despite the fact that you're tired to to plow through in your school or your chores, or whatever it is that you're doing, God himself will bless them So God himself will lead, them got himself will bless them.

God himself will establish them. Yes, they are to make no covenant with them. They are commanded later to drive them out completely but it's the Lord who does it. And so their obedience is a privilege of participation in what the Lord is doing for them. He says, I will cause confusion.

I will make your enemies turn their backs to you. I will drive them out little by little verse 30. I will set their bounds or so, I will set your bounds. He does say you shall drive them out the end of verse 31 you shall make. No, covenant and so forth, But just to show how little the Lord actually needs them.

He says, I'm even going to use Hornets to do it. They're gonna be towns that they show up to and you know the coffee or whatever hot beverage they have is still hot. The houses are empty. The fields are the maintenances right up to that day, whatever. And they look around everyone's gone because a swarm of Hornets showed up that morning because Israel was about to come in and the Hornets.

Drove the people out. Israel could just move in and sit down, Everyone gets, you know, whatever their house is. And, you know, pick up the chores, where the Canaanites left off, except for those way more kananites than there is Israelites. And so the Lord says, undo a little by little so that things don't break down and beasts, don't come and overtake the empty spaces and overrun the land.

And And so the Lord will establish them. What fools are we? When we get the Word of God, telling us about everything suffering trial that produce perseverance that are useful for sanctification. And we come to a suffering or trial, we think. Oh, my life is horrible. That God just told us about those things.

Well we're fools like those To whom. God had told the last few verses of Exodus 23 and then they send spies into the land and this little spies come back and five out of six. Spies say the Amorites are giants and we can't defeat them. Well if one out of six spies or two out of 12, say the Lord God is with us and they're pretty small compared to the Lord, The grapes are huge.

One cluster of grapes has to be put on a pole that takes two men to carry and the hornets are going to drive out the that people who are attending to the vine just until we arrived to take it. Unless it was a day that God used us, then we attack and we still win because the God who can use Hornets, doesn't actually need us.

Does he God? Will establish them. And so particularly in our scientification, the sin that so easily entangles and that seems to still enslave us and the Roman 7 and you say oh my sin and my remaining sinfulness seems so big. Oh really. Is it bigger than God? Is it bigger than the one?

Who's begun the good work in you? Is it bigger than the one? Who's going to be faithful to bring it to completion though. You stumble. Ever so many times though, you grow impatient. Is he not patient, Is he not long suffering? Has he not described himself that way with us?

Does he not continue to extend to you? The means of His grace and we common our dejection and self-focus and discouragement and we become slow to attend upon the means of grace and we more easily miss it. When the one who said he will do, it is the one who gave us them to use, and we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, to find grace, and mercy to help us new.

Forgiveness new mercies every morning. Even if we're in the midst of a time of being disciplined for our sin, which is what lamentations was a time of there being disciplined for their sin. And that's where the text comes from. The mercies of God are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness O Lord?

Got himself will lead them. God himself will bless them. God himself will establish them and give them the completeness of the victory. The fulfillment of all the promises. And if that was true for those who are led by a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus in front of the multitude, how much more true is it?

For those whom Jesus. Enthroned is alreadymer. Having finished his work. Sat upon the throne of glory poured out, his spirit and sent him into our hearts. And by his spirit, Jesus says he and the Father come and dwell with us and make their home with us. So that we are united to the Lord Jesus, so closely that it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us and that the life we live in the flesh, we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us.

He leads us. He blesses us, he will establish us and finish the work that he has begun. Then, let's pray.

We thank you, Father for your great mercy to the nation of Israel that we read here. And the great warning that even in the face of such mercy unbelief could prevail. And now God we come as those who have been shown even greater mercy, amazed that how great the mercy is that we see here in this passage what you have shown us, as actually greater, and yet confessing that the same going astray in our hearts, the same unbelief.

The same backsliding. We are prone to them all and they're even worse because of the greatness of the mercy that you have shown us. And so we pray O Lord that you would continue to minister your words to us by your spirit. Conforming us to your Son even as you have intended to do and to finish doing since, before the world begin under the praise of your glorious.

Grace for which glory. We ask it in Jesus name, amen.