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**C0641 – 11/01/06 – Ex 23:13-33 – God's Promised Blessings For  
Obedience**

The Mosaic Law is for nation of Israel and not the Church. It is a complete unit of law which was fulfilled by Christ (Rom 10:4). My conception of the relationship between the Mosaic Law and the Church is that we can draw principles out from the law that have a firm backing in the NT. So, while it is not written *to* us it is written *for* us. So, none of it can be interpreted as to us but application can be made to for us when the NT writings which are to us are in harmony with the principles. So, that law was entirely set aside by Christ since He fulfilled the law. Then a new body of law was revealed which is called the Law of Christ in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21. In the law of Christ 9 of the 10 Commandments given to Israel are repeated for the Church. The remembrance of and keeping of the Sabbath is the one not repeated. The NT says “One person regards one *day* above another, another regards *every day alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). We are no longer under a principle of law but under grace (Rom 6:14-15) which, when adhered to as a dynamic principle of life results in the keeping of the Law of Christ (1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2).

**XV. Ordinances Connected to Idolatry (23:13)**

**Exodus 23:13 Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth.**

Verse 13, **Now concerning everything which I have said to you**, that is, everything beginning in Exodus 20:3 until this point, **be on your guard**, be on watch because there are pagan nations out there and they want to convert you to their idolatrous practices but you are to convert them to your practices

because your practices are not built on vain philosophies that emanate from human depravity but on the inerrant word of God who made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them (Acts 17:16-34). For that reason you must **be on your guard** with respect to this law I have revealed to you from Mt Sinai. This is My will for your life. Be very careful to meditate on it day and night and not to turn from it to the right or to the left for to do so is to depart from My will and there will be discipline, sin unto death and ultimately disinheritance.

PRINCIPLE: You have to be on your guard as a Christian concerning everything which is written *to* us in the NT epistles and everything that is written *for* us in the rest of the word of God. You better watch out. The world, the flesh, the devil they want to destroy you, they want to corrupt you. They want you to remain spiritual babies. They don't want you to grow spiritually. They don't want you to concentrate on the word of God. They don't want you at this church. They don't want other people to come to this church because they know we're teaching the word of God. They don't want you to hide the word of God in your heart so you don't sin against Him. They don't want you to meditate on the word of God. They don't want you to pray for things you need. They don't want you to live the word of God. They don't want you to know your spiritual gift(s). They want you to doubt the word of God. They want to stir up dissension among us. They want to choke out your Christianity with the worries and riches and pleasures of this life. They want to tempt you to the point where you fall away. They want you to remain spiritual babies so that you will be like children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. They want you to love having your ears tickled. They want you to accumulate teachers in accordance with your own desires. They want you to turn away your ears from the truth and turn aside to myths. They want you to be spiritually impoverished and depressed and turn to **other gods**. They want you to slide off the narrow path of righteousness. You have to be on your guard. Believers don't take this seriously enough. Why? Because we are naïve. We find it hard to believe there is a demonic realm behind the world under the rule of Satan. We find it hard to believe that our flesh could really be all that bad. Yet the Bible says nothing good comes from the flesh (Gal 5:19-21). We find it hard to believe that the world is really so subversive. Yet, the Bible says, friendship with the world is hostility toward God (James 4:4). How cognizant are you of the

demonic realm? They are our enemies (Eph 6:10ff). They want us to forget about them, to forget they are there. A good enemy will cloak himself so that you can't see him. Satan and the demonic realm are masters of cloaking devices and counterfeit. You have to **be on your guard**. 1 John 5:21 says, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." Why? If an idol is just a piece of wood or stone or metal then why do I have to guard myself against them? Because there are real personalities, demons we call them, behind the idols of this world. It's not just a rock or a piece of wood. There were demons behind the gods of Egypt (Exod 12:12). Demons carry ideas and attach false doctrine to idols. Such doctrines as Marxism, Socialism, Communism, Darwinianism, Freudism, Socialism, Existentialism, Rationalism, Naturalism, Gnosticism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Mormonism, Taoism, Confucianism, Scientology, Islam, Mysticism, Catholicism, etc...

We are warned not to be taken captive by vain philosophies. **Colossians 2:8-10** "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;" and **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup> *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,"

**and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth**, for this is the tendency of all men. All men worship for God has place eternity in men's hearts, a gaping abyss in each of our hearts. It is not an issue of whether we worship or not or whether we are religious or not. The issue is "Who or what are we going to worship?" Romans 1:18-32 teaches that if we do not worship God the Creator then we will worship the creation. There is no other option. Worship the One who created you or worship the things He created. And Romans 1 also points out that the tendency for fallen man is to worship **other gods**. This tendency is so great that the **names** of **other gods** ought not even be **mentioned**. Why? For there are real persons, demons we call them behind the **gods** of this world. To mention them could start a chain reaction where the name is passed

through the grapevine from demon to demon until the demon behind that idol hears and comes to you to cause your downfall. So, these are important lessons for the nation of Israel as well as for the Church. We must be on our guard.

## **XVI. Three Annual Feasts to YHWH (23:14-19)**

**Exodus 23:14 Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.**

**<sup>15</sup>"You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.**

**<sup>16</sup>"Also *you shall observe* the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather *in the fruit of* your labors from the field.**

**<sup>17</sup>"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.**

**<sup>18</sup>"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.**

**<sup>19</sup>"You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.**

Israel had three celebration feasts per year. By gathering three times a year this would foster national, social and spiritual unity. The word **celebrate** (*chagag*) means "to make a pilgrimage" in order to "feast". They would make a pilgrimage to the tabernacle in order to feast **to YHWH**, that is, to His glory. In verse 17 it says **three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD**. Traditionally, when they pilgrimed the wives and families would go with them.

Verse 15, the first national feast on the Jewish calendar is **the Feast of Unleavened Bread**. This feast followed on the heels of the Passover and memorializes Israel's separation from sin through faith in God's deliverance. This feast officially began on the night Israel was separated from sin, the

night of the Exodus. The day was Abib 14, 1445BC (or Nisan the Babylonian name, Exod 12:14ff). It is the first feast on Israel's calendar. The **unleavened bread** portrays sinlessness and stands in contrast to leavened bread which portrayed sin. So, the Feast of Unleavened Bread memorialized Israel's separation from the sin filled world of Egypt on the night of the Exodus. By faith alone they were saved from sin and sin's penalty; eternal condemnation and set free to righteousness. And so, for **seven days** they were **to eat unleavened bread** in remembrance of their separation from sin on the night of the Exodus. They should no longer live as the old man but as the new man. For this reason the law was given, to instruct them as to the walk of the new man, a walk of holiness.

And at this feast, **none shall appear before Me empty handed**. That is, you should bring a sacrifice to God in the tabernacle which God is about to describe. The sacrifice should be the firstborn son who would be redeemed and the firstborn of the flocks (Exod 34:18-20)

Verse 16, the second national feast on the Jewish calendar is **the Feast of the Harvest or Firstfruits**, also known as the Feast of Weeks and Pentecost. This feast was celebrated 50 days after Passover, at this feast one would bring **the firstfruits of what was sown in the field**.

The third national feast on the Jewish calendar is **the Feast of the Ingathering or Feast of Tabernacles or Booths**. It was celebrated **at the end of the agricultural or civil year when** they had gathered **in the fruit of their labors from the field**. Again, these three feasts would solidify the national, social and spiritual unity of the nation.

Verse 18 gives further instruction regarding the blood of the Passover sacrifice which stands in connection with the Feast of Unleavened Bread of v 15. **You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread**. That is, while there is still **leavened bread** in the house. Remember, each family or group of 10-20 people would choose a year old goat or lamb without blemish (later it was only a lamb) to redeem the firstborn son. They would slaughter the lamb as a picture of substitutionary blood atonement. Christ is the fulfillment of Passover, being the Lamb of God. This blood sacrifice should not be offered **with leavened bread** still in the house. It must have been removed beforehand.

**nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.**

That is, they were not to keep leftovers of the Passover lamb. They were to dispose of it by burning before morning. Partaking of the Passover lamb is a single event.

Verse 19, gives further instruction regarding the Feast of Harvest of Firstfruit of Weeks. **You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God.** It shall go into the tabernacle which is about to be built. The tabernacle is the portable worship house of God. **You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.** There are many different views as to why this was prohibited. The most popular explanation is that this was a pagan practice of the Canaanites as discovered in the Ras Shamra tablets. Apparently the Canaanite gods boil a kid in milk, a lamb in butter, and this practice led the Canaanite worshippers to follow the same practice at festival celebrations. Therefore, God prohibited this in order to keep the Israelites away from such idolatrous practices. This would be an example of guarding against idolatry. It is interesting that it is this ordinance which is the Jewish basis for not mixing meat and milk products. No cheeseburgers in Israel. No ham omelet's and the like.

### **XVII. God's Promised Blessings for Obedience (23:20-33)**

This is the epilogue to the proposed Suzerainty-vassal treaty. The prologue was in 20:22-26. Remember, God is the great King, the suzerain. Israel did not have a human king at this time. And Israel is the servant of the King, the vassal. If they would obey the King He would bless them. If they disobeyed He would curse them. What follows is a description, primarily of God's blessing on Israel if they were obedient.

**<sup>20</sup> "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.**

**<sup>21</sup> "Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.**

**22 "But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.**

**23 "For My angel will go before you and bring you in to *the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites*; and I will completely destroy them.**

**24 "You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their *sacred pillars* in pieces.**

**25 "But you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.**

**26 "There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.**

**27 "I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn *their backs* to you.**

**28 "I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.**

**29 "I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.**

**30 "I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.**

**31 "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates*; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.**

**32 "You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods.**

**33 "They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for *if* you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."**

Verse 20, **Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way.** Remember, they are not in the Promised Land of Canaan yet. They are at Mt Sinai which is either in the Sinai Peninsula or the Arabian Peninsula. So, this angel is going to go **before them to guard them along the way to bring them into the place which I have prepared.**

This is kind of marvelous that God has already **prepared** the Promised Land for them. Who is the angel? There is no doubt that this is the “angel of the Lord”. This is not just any angel. The “angel of the Lord” is the pre-incarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity. That this is true is verified by

**Joshua 5:13-15** Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" <sup>14</sup> He said, "No; rather I indeed come now *as* captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" <sup>15</sup> The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

I am convinced that this is also “the angel of the Lord”, the pre-incarnate Christ who serves as captain of the angelic host of the Lord. With this superior army the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

Verse 21 **Be on your guard before him** for He is your guardian, **and obey his voice**, this is the key condition for Israel, obedience to the angel of the Lord; **do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression**, not that He does not have the right or power to forgive, He does because He is one and the same as God. The “angel of the Lord” is distinct from God in person but one with God in essence. All three members of the trinity have the power to forgive sin but this verse says He will not. The reason given is because or **since My name is in him**. The name here is YHWH. Little explanation is given here.

Verse 22, **But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries**. The condition that Israel must meet to enjoy military conquest is true obedience, that is, obedience from the heart. Obedience was not merely external in the Mosaic Law. External obedience was to stem from internal obedience. If they were obedient then Israel would enjoy military conquest. How?

Verse 23, **For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.** The “angel of the Lord” who is YHWH will bring them into the land that is inhabited by all these peoples and it is God who **will completely destroy them.** They need merely follow the LORD into battle. He will do the fighting if they truly obey His voice

Verse 24, **You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces.** How do we explain the fact that God said He would destroy them but here it says Israel **shall utterly overthrow them.** God will be the primary army and Israel will be the secondary army. This is seen quite clearly in the battle of Jericho where the pre-incarnate Christ shows up as captain of an angelic army (Josh 5:13-15). When they enter the land of these pagan peoples, descendants of Noah we might add, they once had the truth but they distorted the truth of one true God and now worshipped many gods. But Israel should **not worship their gods, nor serve them.** Again idolatry is prohibited in preparation for the incident with the golden calf. **Nor do according to their deeds.** It is not proper to worship their objects of worship, nor is it proper to do **their deeds.** One’s worship is related to one’s deeds. It is not proper to mix worship of YHWH with pagan deeds. You shall worship and serve the Lord your God and Him alone!

Instead, when they enter the land and encounter their altars and statues and sacred pillars they shall **break** them into pieces.

Verse 25 **But you shall serve the LORD your God,** for He is the only God and He is **your God,** and He is YHWH, the eternal and immanent God. God is calling for total dedication of the people to His service. Israel as a vassal nation was to serve their King. If they served the King **He would bless their bread and...water,** necessities for physical life, **and I will remove sickness from your midst.** We saw something very similar in Exod 15:26.

**Exodus 15:26** And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the

diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

It's interesting that in both cases water was involved. God made the bitter waters of Marah sweet so they would not cause disease among the Israelites. Here God promised he would bless their bread and water, obviously both means through which we can become sick. God did not promise to heal by miracles all sickness if they had enough faith that He could heal. What God said was if you obey me and serve me then these diseases will not come upon you. People want a way around the obedience part. We know in the NT that physical sickness can be a result of disobedience (1 Cor 11:17-34) although it should never be thought that all physical sickness is due to disobedience.

Verse 26, if they obey and serve God only then **There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land;** We've never seen anything like this among a people in the world. Probably all these things will be actual in the millennial kingdom when Israel's obedience is actual. Isaiah said,

**Isaiah 65:23** They will not labor in vain, Or bear *children* for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them.

**I will fulfill the number of your days,** that is, you will live a long life. In the millennium people will live for the entire 1,000 years. Isaiah says their lives will be like trees.

**Isaiah 65:20** "No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few days*, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be *thought* accursed

<sup>22</sup> "They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people,

Verse 27, **I will send My terror ahead of you,** that is, the terror of the Lord is the angel of the Lord, He will go **ahead of** the Israelites when they advance upon enemies, **and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come,** so that they are easy to destroy, **and I will make all**

**your enemies turn *their* backs to you**, they will run in fear because of **My terror** and you will strike them from the back and destroy them.

Verse 28, **I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you**, the same group mentioned above but in shortened form. The **hornets** are figurative of “terror and dread” parallel with **My terror** which is the angel of the Lord. “the Arabs to this day call panic resulting in mass flight by a word signifying ‘hornet’ (Cassuto, 308).

Verse 29, **I will not drive them out before you in a single year**, and he did not, it took seven years (1405-1398BC according to the figures revealed in Joshua 14:7, 10). The reason given is so **that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you**, for this would only endanger them but a slower conquest would be much safer in the end. Therefore, verse 30, **I will drive them out before you little by little**, allowing you time to **become fruitful and take possession of the land**. This word **possession** is very important. It is the Hebrew word *nachal* which means “inheritance, possession”. See, their inheritance of the land was conditioned on obedience to God. To inherit or possess the land is different than being a resident in the land. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob never inherited the land. Exodus 6:4 says they “sojourned in the land”, that is, they lived, they dwelled in the land but they never inherited the land. Even the Book of Hebrews says

**Hebrews 11:8-10** By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Verse 13 says that Abraham never received the promises (Heb 11:13). Yet he was faithful to God until death and as a result, Hebrews says he will have a place in the new Jerusalem along with all others who die in faith to the Lord. The main point is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were *ger's*, sojourners in the land. They never inherited the land. They were living as alien's in a foreign land. God was promising Moses' generation that, if they were

obedient then they would inherit the land, they would be the owners of the land. They would not merely live among these peoples in a foreign land. They would be the owners of the land. However, we know that because of disobedience this generation did not possess the land, they did not receive their earthly inheritance despite the fact that they were, according to Paul, believers (1 Cor 10:1-4ff). They wandered around in the wilderness for forty years and died without taking possession of the land. Possession of the land would take place during the next generation under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb who were strong and courageous and obedient to God (Josh 1:1-18).

Verse 31, **I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates***; Another promise of military victory and final rest, a **fixed boundary** around their inheritance. You know, the US is trying to build a fence between us and Mexico and this is a great controversy yet it provides protection and God was promising to **fix** Israel's **boundaries**. All this blessing is conditioned on obedience. **for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.** God will do the **delivering of the inhabitants of the land, and** Israel will do the **driving them out**. It is a promise that God will go before them. God always does His part. It is a command that they should drive them out. Man does not always do his part. Joshua and his generation obeyed partially and enjoyed partial victory and partial rest. They did not receive the entire inheritance described by these borders. As Tom Constable says, "Israel was less successful than she might have been due to incomplete obedience."

Verse 32, **You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods.** If they were to **make covenants with them** then this would, sooner or later, lead to, the adoption of a similar attitude **to their gods**. They were entering a covenant with YHWH. If they were to make a covenant with another nation or their gods then what would this say about YHWH? That He was not sufficient for all their needs! The attitude of many is that I need God + something else, but that is the attitude of idolatry. God is not sufficient.

Verse 33, **They shall not live in your land**, the word for **live** is *yashab* and means "remain. In other words you should drive them out of the fixed boundaries completely. You are not to make a deal with them so they can

stay. Why? **because they will make you sin against Me;** The nation of Israel was to be separate from the surrounding nations. Their mere presence in the land will lead to sin against God. You can never mix up paganism and biblical Christianity. You will compromise, you will sin more. You cannot bring the world into that which God has separated from the world. You are living in a fantasy if you think you can dress the world up in Christian clothing. Finally, **for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.** Remember, God knows what He's talking about. We think we are so wise. One of the things about wisdom is that you don't have to make a mistake to gain wisdom. A wise man doesn't learn something from mistakes but rather from heeding God's instruction. Joshua and his generation did a lot to drive these peoples out of the land but they did not remove them completely. And what happened? Eventually they fell into what? Idolatry, serving foreign **gods** and this led to the exile of both the northern and southern kingdoms. God knows what He's talking about.

The bottom line of this section is that Israel would enjoy military victory and full inheritance of the land if they obeyed their KING. Their salvation was by faith alone but the reward of inheriting the land was conditioned on obedience.

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