

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in The Book of Exodus
Lesson 11 – Exodus 20:22-23:19
Journey to Freedom
Life Under God's Leadership

Having given Israel the Law of God in the Ten Commandments, Moses then explained and applied that Law to various aspects of human life. Wherever there is law, there must be interpretation and application; otherwise the law is impractical and not at all helpful. In the beginning, it was the priests who taught and applied the Law in Israel, but in later years, it was the scribes and rabbis who became the professional teachers of the Law. Unfortunately, their interpretations became as authoritative as the original Law, and it was this error that Jesus exposed through His teachings, especially the Sermon on the Mount.

In chapter 21 we see that the Jews were allowed to buy and sell servants, but they were forbidden to treat them as slaves. Sometimes people had to sell themselves into service because of their poverty, but their service was limited to only six years. Then they had to be freed.

The judicial system in Israel, like our system of courts today, depended on just laws, honest judges, and faithful witnesses. God's laws were just, but they could be deliberately misinterpreted by an unjust judge, or a lying witness could give false testimony. When it comes to applying the law, God does not want the wicked to be justified. But when it comes to saving lost sinners, God in His grace justifies the ungodly. He can do this because the penalty for our sins was embraced on the cross by His Son.

The worship of God and the working of the land were bound together. Israel's religious festivals were tied to the agricultural year in a series of "sevens." The seventh day was the Sabbath and the seventh year was the Sabbatical Year. The weekly Sabbath not only reminded the Jews that they belonged to God, but it also showed God's care for the health of man and beast and the "health" of the land. The Sabbatical Year gave even more opportunity for rest and restoration.

Passover speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The Feast of First Fruits is a type of His resurrection, and the Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of His coming again and the future kingdom of joy and fullness.

6. What does 22:21-27 tell you about God's character and priorities?

7. What does it mean that you "*shall not follow a crowd to do evil?*" Why do you think it is so easy to follow the crowd? (See 23:1-3)

8. What is the principle taught in verse 23:9?

9. Think about the purposes of the Sabbath year and Sabbath day. What do they say about God's character and priorities? (See 23:10-12)

10. What are the 3 feasts? What was the purpose of each one? What effect would the 3 times a year required, have on the people? (See 23:14-19)

The Human Machine

Exodus 23:12

The law made provisions for people and animals to have one day of rest each week. God knew the makeup of His creatures. Neither human or beast was capable of working endlessly like a machine.

Yet today, when more people work with machines than with animals, there's a tendency to start seeing people as machines rather than human beings with a need for rest and refreshment. This trend is accelerated by a common view of the world that reduces everything to the material and ignores the spiritual side of life.

The law's amplification of the fourth commandment, which concerns the Sabbath, reflects not only a godly view of work, but a godly view of humanity. We are more than just sophisticated pieces of technology. We are living souls made in the image of God. Therefore, as He rested from His work, so should we.