

## Exod 04-02-29b

Let's resume our study this morning in Exodus chapter 13, or 23. If you go to 13, you've got ten chapters to read to catch up. Exodus chapter 23, we're looking at the 11th of 12 sections making up this account of the giving of the law to Israel.

You will note that we're about to move on with the story here after God delivers these sayings to Moses at Mount Sinai, and yet there's quite a bit more to the law than what we have seen. You have Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and there's a great fleshing out and magnification of the principles that are summarized and given in great concise nature here. But if you step back, I've always had trouble ever since I was a youth in thinking about the law of Moses.

It's just so big. There's so much of it. After you get Genesis, and then you get halfway through Exodus, you have the law, and it seems like it takes up the last half of Exodus, and it takes up Numbers and Deuteronomy, and there's just endless reams of it.

And I think, you know, the ox here and the sheep there, and the neighbor here, and digging the pit, and this, that, and the other, and all of it. Leviticus, you go through all of the details of the Levitical sacrifices, and I think, you know, I'm just glad I'm not an Israelite. I don't have to go through the blood sacrifices.

I don't have to try to remember all these little nit-picky details. So then I ask myself, well, why did God give me all of this stuff that was for Israel? I would suspect that there was revelation from God about how to do an animal sacrifice way back, because Abel knew how to do it, and there's nothing in the first couple of chapters of Genesis on how to do an animal. It just says that Cain and Abel were there, and Abel brought a sacrifice from the flock, and Cain brought his from the garden.

Brought his little tossed salad and put it up there with the fruit of his hands. How did Abel know how the sacrifice was supposed to be performed? Well, there was some kind of communication, but God didn't feel the need to give us that. We don't need that information.

So I ask myself this question, why do I need this information? Why do we need this? Who's going to go out this afternoon and say, boy, Exodus 23.9, that's how I'm going to live my day. It just does not pertain. It doesn't relate.

So it's my job to try to suggest how it does relate. And that's why we began our study this morning, looking at the New Testament, looking at what it says in Hebrews, what it says in Timothy about the word of God, because this is the word of God. It's inspired and it is profitable for us.

How is it profitable? It is an example of what is right, and it's different than what we think is what is right. We don't think it's good to treat enemies well. We don't think it's necessary to do some of the things that are coming up.

As an example, take a look at Exodus 23, verse 10. As I said, this begins part 11 of our 12 parts. You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield.

But on the seventh year, you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat, and whatever they leave, the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. So basically, all of the crops... So what year is this? This is 2004.

We've got the spring coming up here shortly. So you'd go out and plant your fields and cultivate them all summer long. In the fall, you would have the harvest, bring the wheat into the barn, collect the olives, get the grapes out of the vineyard.

And then, let's say next year is the seventh year. So next year, when springtime comes, don't plant anything, don't plow anything, don't weed anything. You just leave the field to do what it wants to.

Well, of course, in the process of harvesting and cultivating and so on, you didn't get every single grain of wheat. You didn't catch every olive. You didn't get every grape.

The vines are going to return. The olive trees are going to still be there. The wheat is going to grow up sort of wild in the field.

It's not going to be a bumper crop like it would be if you plowed and cultivated and sown and all that. But the wheat field is going to produce some wheat. God says, just leave it alone and let it grow as it will.

And normally, in a regular year, during the time of harvest, the Israelites were to harvest the center of their field, but they were to leave the corners for the poor. You read the book of Ruth. This is what Ruth does for Naomi and herself.

This is how she meets Boaz. She's out there gleaning in the corner of his field. Well, in the seventh year, the whole field is a gleaning place for the poor.

It's not going to be very thick. It's not going to be as well-fruited as it would have been had it been cultivated, but there's going to be enough there. It's kind of like the corners of the field.

So the poor still have access to something to sustain them. So that the needy of your people may eat, whatever they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. You say, oh, I don't want the animals coming in.

I don't want the deer and the ibexes and various things coming in and eating the wheat, the birds picking away the grapes and the olives. God says, just let the animals have it. Let it go.

He follows this by saying, six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, your sojourner, may refresh themselves. So there is this Sabbath idea, this six days of work, six years of work, and then the seventh lying fallow. Now what would

happen if we did this in this country? We run our businesses, we run all of our stuff for six years, and then in the seventh year, we just lay off.

We take a year off. Professors at colleges do this. What do they call it? Sabbatical.

That's why they call it a sabbatical. It's like a year off. Shabbat, the root of the word, not only is it from Sheba, which is seven, but also Shabbat is a word that means to stop.

It's hard to know which came first, the chicken or the egg. Did Shabbat mean to stop and it was used for the Sabbath, or did the Sabbath get instituted as a time of stopping and the word came to mean that? We don't know. It goes back into the dark origins of the Hebrew language.

But if we were going to do this, Dan's got a business, some of the rest of you all have a job, Joseph's got a business, I've got a business in the past. If we just said, okay, I've been working for six years, I'm just going to take a year off. I'm going to do nothing.

I had a friend that actually did that when he got out of the Marine Corps. He got enough socked away. He just took a year, got to Winnebago, just traveled around, shot turkeys and had a big time.

But to do that, what would you need? What would you need in the sixth year? You would need a really good year in the sixth year to be able to do that seventh year thing, right? Not only that, but when you get to the first year of the next set of seven, when you get to year number eight or year number one of the next seven, what are you going to sow? What are you going to use for seed in the spring? You say, okay, we had that sabbatical last year, now I'm going to crank up a fresh year. Where are you going to get the grain to sow? That sixth year had better be a bumper year because you've got to have enough to sustain you in the sixth year, your normal harvest, plus you've got to set aside some for the seventh year, plus you've got to have some seed to plant in the eighth year, in year one of the next set of seven, the Monday of the following week of years. So you basically have to have a triple crop in the sixth year.

Is this practical? Is this reasonable to expect? Not in any business I've ever been in. I never went along and suddenly had a triply productive year. It just doesn't really happen.

But God instructs this in Israel. And the first sixth year that they have when they go into the land is a bumper year. They get a triple crop.

They get a three-fold crop. So what do the Israelites do? Boy, this is great. I'm going to expand.

I'm going to sow even more seed next year. I'm going to sell to the neighboring countries. I'm going to turn this into capital.

I'm going to convert it to cash. I'm going to convert it to coin. I'm going to build new barns.

I'm going to expand. This is what they did. And they did not observe the seventh year because the bumper year just surpassed all expectations.

So they said, why should we stop now? We've got a good thing going. If it did three times what it normally does this year, no telling what it will do next year. So what seemed right to those men? Because did they rationalize it? Look at the way God is blessed.

Surely he wants me to, he's showing me this is a sign from heaven that I am a farmer par excellence. I should just farm the daylights out of every scrap of land that I own. There is a way that seems right.

And this is what they did. They ignored the Sabbath. Six days you ought to do your work.

By the way, what also happens every seven years? What have we seen earlier on? You have the slaves, Hebrews, people that are indentured get turned loose, right? Isn't this a wonderful coincidence that a man who has been a slave for four or five or six years gets turned loose in this seventh year, which is a year of rest for the land. He's got a year to get himself organized and get ready to resume work in society because all of the fields and the olive groves and the vineyards are lying fallow. He is the poor.

He's a just released slave. The land lies before him to enable him to get a start. He can sustain himself.

He's got a year to figure out what to do now that he's not indentured anymore. What a great system. It is fueled by the grace of God.

It depends upon obedience. How long do you think God is going to give them triple crops in the sixth year if they fail to observe the Sabbath, if they fail to turn loose their indentured slaves, if they fail to heed the word of doctrine and reproof and correction and instruction? God's going to say, why should I waste a triple crop on you when you're not going to use it for its intended purpose? You're going to consume it on your own desires. You've got a better plan than the Lord God, so I'll just let you till the soil and your crop is going to decrease and decrease and decrease year by year.

What did God tell Cain? The land will no longer yield to you her strength. Why? He removed himself from the place of blessing. He removed himself from the place of relationship and progress with God.

He killed his brother. 6 days, verse 12, you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease so that your ox and your donkey may rest in the son of your female slave. This is the lowest of the low in terms of rank, not in terms of value, but in terms of status or standing or usefulness.

The female slave is the least valuable of the slaves in terms of what you would have to remunerate someone to have them, and their son is not good for anything. He's a mouth to feed. He doesn't produce anything.

He is the least valuable member of the extended household, but whether it's the ox that pulls

the plow or pulls the cart, whether it is the donkey that carries goods to market, carries the owner from place to place, whether it is the least of the slaves in the household, everyone equally rests on the Sabbath day. It is irrespective of rank, whether they are white collar, blue collar, no collar, everyone rests to refresh themselves. Now, we talked about this when we saw the Sabbath commandment in the tables of the law.

We don't do Sabbath observance, most of us. We don't do Sabbath observance. You do have your Sabbatarians, you have your Adventists, and so on.

You've got some of your Messianic Jewish congregations still meet on Saturday. How come we don't meet on Saturday? It's part of God's Word. It was given to Israel.

But we saw when we reviewed this principle over in Hebrews, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. The Apostle Paul tells us, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or what you drink or what you eat, or by the observance of days. We reckon every day alike.

So, if every day is alike, is this principle just off the board? We don't have to pay any attention to it? It's not. We have a higher calling now, because it's easy to look at a calendar and say, oh, it's Saturday, shut everything down, flip the switch, put the ox in the barn, and let's just refresh ourselves. That's easy.

Anybody can read a calendar, almost anybody. For you and me, we have to examine our lives. We have to find the time of Sabbath rest.

We look at something and we say, this is six parts of my work, and one part, resting in God's provision, refreshing myself in God's mercy, availing myself of God's promises and God's faithfulness. We have to figure out the six parts that belong to us. We have to figure out that seventh part that belongs to God.

It's a great custom that we have developed to worship on the first day of the week, because in Israel, you work for six days and then you give God the seventh day. In the Christian world, the first day of the week is the day we devote to God. I like to think of it in that way in our own lives, that when we look at the six parts that belong to us and the seventh part that belongs to God, His part comes first.

We start by making that separation and figuring out what it is we have to leave to God. That sounds very esoteric and theological, but in practical terms, what does it mean? Suppose you're a young person and it's time to go get a job. Suppose you're a not so young person and it's time to go get a job.

Suppose that there is a decision to be made in your finances when you have a job. You think, well, how do I think about this biblically? On the one hand, I can't sit in my living room and wait for God to ring the phone and have somebody call me up and say, please come work for us. We need you and we'd like to give you a job.

It involves some sort of effort on my part, right? I have to draft a resume. I need to make some calls. I need to try to get some interviews.

But on the other hand, I don't know which employer, I don't know exactly which kind of job or how long it's going to take. Many of us have been through this job search scenario maybe more than once. You know that there is a real wrestling match in the soul.

How much work is enough work for me to look for a job and how much should I just rest in God and wait for him to bring the right contact and the right confluence of circumstances so that I get in touch with the people who are looking for me just like I'm looking for them. Same thing with dating. I recognized very early on in my late teenage, early twenties that I did not have the gift of celibacy and that I very much needed to have all of the omissions and gaps in my character and my life filled by a wonderful woman.

And again, you can't just sit in a vacuum and wait for God to parachute one in through the skylight. But how much effort do you put into the search? The old truism is, well, go to church. You want to find a nice girl, go to church.

Lots of pretty girls go to church on Sunday morning as opposed to you can look for them in bars, you can look for them in other out of the way places. But if you think about the long term, the whole dating scenario that is portrayed in our modern media is a very short sighted, short term, live in the moment. People seem to take pride in the fact that they know how to party and that they can get drunk quicker than anyone else or they'll take any dare, they'll do anything, they're on the edge.

Being edgy people think is attractive. And once again, there is a way that seems right, but the ends are the ways of death. You look at someone who is in middle age and has raised a family.

You look at someone who is a wife and mother. Is this the person that you want to be out on the edge and can drink everybody under the table and can run in and throw up and come right back and dance the night away? It's a non sequitur. It does not follow.

What are you looking for? You say, well, I just want to party and have a good time. Well, the problem is you use yourself up and when it comes time for the long term, it comes time for the substantial things of life. You've burnt your money.

You've spent your inheritance. You're the guy out there with the swine wishing you were back home. You screw yourself up.

You scar yourself doing that kind of thing. There is no free lunch. There is no free ride.

I can do it now and it just won't make a difference later. You carry your memories. You carry the scars.

You carry relationships. People parent children. Offspring happen out of unhappy moments.

All of this takes place because we don't know the right way. We don't think far enough ahead. So when we look at our lives, it's not a matter of figuring out which day is Saturday on the calendar.

It's a matter of looking at what part of this is my responsibility and what part of it do I leave up to God. And you will notice the proportion. Six days you labor.

Six days you work. Six years you cultivate the land. Every seventh year you turn things over to God.

It is a time of refreshment. It is a time of restoration. It is a time to let God provide for the poor.

Let God sustain you through that period. Look at verse 13. Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard.

Be careful. Concerning everything which I have said to you. This sounds like kind of a summary statement here doesn't it? Everything which I have said to you, be careful.

Do not mention the name of other gods. Do not let them be heard from your mouth. This is a choice.

This is the choice we talked about in our first session this morning. We don't have to figure out what is the right way. God has communicated it to us.

It's in His Word. We've got 66 books in this Bible. We've got a nice thick guide to what is doctrinal.

What is a way of righteousness. And what is not. Our task is to be careful.

To be diligent. To think about it. To pay attention to it.

And this is the most overlooked, it's the simplest thing in the world and it's the most overlooked skill. There's nothing like standing up on a bridge or getting up in an airplane or surveying a vast swarm of people. Have you ever gone up to the second level of a mall and just looked at the endless, it reminds you of an anthill.

There's just people swarming every which way. You get up on an overpass like the one at LBJ and I30 at either end and you just see swarms of cars. They're like little bugs all over the place.

And you think, you know, there's people with souls. God is evaluating. There's just billions of us.

And you think, how does He keep track? Because the vast majority of us care nothing for the things of God. He doesn't really have that much to keep track of. We have the chance to be smarter than that.

We have the chance to avail ourselves of the wisdom of God. Concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard. We ought to get up every morning.

It ought to be on the mirror as we're brushing our teeth. Be on your guard. Remember what God said? Be careful.

Think about it. It makes a difference. It makes a difference.

Now in verse 14, He gives these national feasts. Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to me. 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, this is the Nisan of later Jewish calendar. At the appointed time, this is 14th Nisan is Passover, 15th on is the feast of unleavened bread.

Because in it you came out of Egypt, none shall appear before me empty handed. Also you shall observe the feast of the harvest of first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field. Also the feast of ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field.

Three times a year all your mails shall appear before the Lord God. Now why does God do this? Three times a year all your mails shall appear before the Lord God. Where is the Lord God? He is at the tabernacle while they are in the wilderness and in the first period of time in the land.

Ultimately He is going to be in Jerusalem at the temple. That is the place of the presence of God. That is where the Shekinah comes down and fills it when Solomon builds the temple.

Prior to that it was the tabernacle which resided various places. For a while at least bits and pieces of it were at Shiloh. All of the mails are to appear three times a year.

How practical is this? What if we had this today? God is in Chicago. Three times a year every Christian man will appear before the Lord in Chicago. It would be a nightmare.

Can you imagine everybody trying to cram, I don't even like Chicago, and trying to cram into that town? Every mail three times a year. So this is like April and then end of July and then October. Three times a year everybody descends.

It would be havoc. It would be worse than a Chinese fire drill. So three times a year all your mails shall appear before the Lord God.

What is God trying to do here? First of all remember the size of the land of Israel. It is very small. You can traverse it on foot in either direction in a few days.

Secondly what is the practical effect of this? How far away can an Israelite move and still be obedient to this command? He can go as far as he is willing to travel three times a year to get back to Jerusalem, to get back to the center of Israel. So what is the effect of this requirement? It has several effects. One, it keeps the people in a concentric circle around the presence of God.

However far they go they better find a way back three times a year and they are relatively spaced. You have the first one in the Aprilish time frame, you know Passover, Easter as we call it. You have it at the first fruits.

The earliest crops start coming in the middle of the summer, July time frame. The last of the crops, the big end gathering and the threshing and all of that takes place in the late fall, October time frame. So three times a year they all appear before the Lord.

What else does this do? Well take a look at the effect of the Hajj, the pilgrimage that Muslims make to Mecca. If you have ever seen a documentary on that and if you haven't and you get the chance check it out of the library or watch it on PBS or whatever. It is very educational.

All Muslims are supposed to make this pilgrimage at least once in their life. There is a big long documentary that gives you all of the details and there are people from all over the world who go and make this pilgrimage and act out some of the things that Mohammed supposedly did. Whatever else you want to say about it, the interviews that they had with people that participated, like American Muslims, they had a woman who joined up with Islam and went to this thing.

She is like an American college university professor. She went and they were interviewing her. Over and over again the people said, I never felt such a sense of unity, such a sense of belonging, such a sense of community and being a part of a much greater fabric as I did when I went on this pilgrimage and saw all of these others who were intent on the same thing I was, who believed the same way I do, who value the same things I value.

You can read a statistic that there are so many million Muslims on the earth, but when you see so many, hundreds of thousands in one place, you realize that you are a part of something greater. So there is, maybe it is a bad example, but in gathering as a people, as a nation of men, you see the same thing with promise keepers. The ethos of that whole movement is community, standing united with other men to be faithful to keep one's promises and so on.

Three times a year appear before the Lord God. So it keeps them localized, it keeps them united and what else? We have two great religious holidays each year, Christmas and Easter as people like to call it. Not too many months can go by before you have something to think about in terms of the Lord.

We celebrate His death, burial and resurrection on Resurrection Week and Resurrection Sunday. We celebrate His birth and His advent into human life in December, Christmas time. If we had a third one, it would be celebrating the raising of Lazarus or something.

But what do those holidays do? The two that we do celebrate, you could throw in Thanksgiving maybe, but it is pretty close to Christmas. Well, whatever it pulls us back as believers, as Christians, we try to reflect on the true reason for the season, the meaning of the holiday. If we didn't have those holidays, a lot of us might not ever really pull ourselves up short and think

about those truths.

So they serve that function. Well, it did the same thing in Israel. You can't go for very long without having to face the Lord God.

Every seventh day you are supposed to stop and refresh yourself and remember Him and His work as Creator and as Sustainer and as the theocratic King of Israel. Verse 18, You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the fat of my feast to remain overnight until morning. 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. Now, this seems like just a complete non sequitur. Let's look at these two verses in the time that remains to us.

You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the fat of my feast to remain overnight until morning. Leaven is the universal symbol of corruption. It is that which causes something to ferment.

There was to be no leavened bread. There was to be no honey because these are things that ferment. There was a great sort of a beer that they used to make in Canaan, a fermented drink that was made from honey.

In fact, was it mead or something like that? The Vikings have some kind of a drink that's made out of fermented honey. Do not offer the blood of my sacrifice. The blood is the point of the sacrifice.

We're going to see that when we get a little further into the Levitical offerings. Do not mix it with leavened bread. Why? The sacrifice is designed to purify.

You don't corrupt the very sacrifice that is here as a picture of purification. The fat should not remain overnight until morning. What is the first part of a piece of meat to go rancid? It's the fat.

When you make jerky, what's the first thing you trim off? The fat. You get lean meat and you dry it and it will last. Pemmican and this kind of thing is dried, cured meat.

You don't leave big chunks of fat on it because that's the part that goes bad. God's feast, God's sacrifice are not to have these symbols, these elements of corruption. We don't do sacrifices now, so why do we care about this? In the same way that we can bring the Sabbath principle into our thinking and into our lives, figuring out what is my part and what is God's part, the sacrifice that we are to offer, the altar upon which we offer it is given to us over in Romans 12 and in 1 Peter 2. What is that? It's us.

We do not offer a defiled sacrifice. We don't mix in corruption. A lot of church worship today is intermingled.

It is spoiled by the addition of things that are patently against the Word of God. Go to the book of James. It says don't prefer those that are rich.

Don't treat someone based on their status or their standing and yet over and over you have celebrity ship, you have celebrity speakers, you have people trying to get more people into the church by bringing in someone important and favoring them and honoring them. There is a lot of back slapping that goes on in our modern large church worship. The focus drifts away from the Lord and into people.

What a wonderful ministry you have there brother and what a wonderful song you sang or what a wonderful thing you did with the Sunday school kids or what a wonderful trip we have coming up to ski in Colorado or whatever it might be. The focus becomes on the community, on the things that enrich and make fellowship flavorful, but you miss the meat. Anybody that cooks steaks knows that when you go down there and buy the meat, you want to get the marbled ones, at least unless you're a health nut.

But for me, I look for marbled ones because that's where the flavor is. You can trim it off later, but that's what seasons and flavors the meat is that good fat. Fat is a good thing when you're eating a steak, but if you're offering it to the Lord, you trim that away.

There is a difference in what satisfies us and what satisfies the Lord. We have plenty of meals that satisfy us, but the meat that is offered to the Lord, you see this is the same division that we make in our time and in our efforts. Six parts is ours, one part is the Lord's.

When we look at what belongs to the Lord, when we look at our lives before him, it is not to be corrupted, it is not to be defiled. Those things that defile tend to be the things that we enjoy. I promise you if you took one bite of unleavened bread and then a bite of leavened bread, you would like the leavened bread better.

If I give you lean dry meat and I give you a piece of meat that's got a nice flavor of broiled fat on it, the au jus, you're going to like that one better. But it isn't what pleases us that necessarily pleases God. We have to look at his word to find out what pleases him.

You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God. How do we apply this? We don't take in crops, we don't have first fruits. This goes to priorities.

What is your priority? What is most important? If you come into some money, what's the first thing that comes into your mind about how to spend it or how to invest it or what to do with it? If you suddenly find yourself with a group of people or you're in a gathering and there's a great opportunity for social pleasure, what's the first thing that comes into our mind? Do we say, well, I'm really going to get into this and please myself. I can think of a lot of good ways to spend this money or spend this time or enjoy these relationships and really get some personal satisfaction and pleasure out of it. Where in that is our upward look? Where is our altar? Do we say, well, before I do any of this, I really want to check and remind myself that I belong to God.

Is there an element here? Is there a way I can function in this situation that will be more pleasing to God than some other way? Maybe not. There's a lot of preachers that would stand up and say, you know, any of that money, 10%, chunk it into the treasury. This is not the idea.

The idea is, where is your heart? Is your heart focused on pleasing God first? When the crops came in and the Israelites got the first green of the wheat ripened into gold and they went out and they gathered a few shocks of it and they looked at it and said, boy, this is going to be a great year. God has really blessed our field. Look at the healthy, there's no weed, there's no mold.

It's going to be a beautiful crop. The first thought that they were to have was, I want to take this and show it to the Lord. I want to honor the Lord and thank Him for His grace in giving me this bounty.

The very first of this wheat, I'm going to take and show it to Him. It was a wave offering. It was a show forth offering, acknowledging God, having first place.

We don't get to reap wheat much anymore, but we have bounty that comes to us. We have opportunity that comes to us. We have the stewardship of our time.

If Saturday comes, Saturday night comes, we think, well, I can run an R-rated movie, R what? What can I do with my time? Do we ever take an upward glance? Do we ever think, what would really be most beneficial in the plan of God because I'm a believer? What would be the best use of my time? Our crop is really our time. That's our resource. Now, finally, you are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.

This is an injunction that is repeated three different times in the law. There's another one like it that says you will not take a bird and its eggs and scramble the eggs and eat the bird as a little dinner all together. It's the same idea.

How does this tie in? Well, if a goat has a kid, has a baby goat, it's going to have milk while that young goat is nursing. Once the kid is weaned, the milk is going to dry up, right? So this tells us that this is during the time that the mother goat is nursing. She's producing this milk.

There was an ancient pagan Canaanite practice of seething a kid in its mother's milk. They had the idea that this is what it's all about. Reproduction.

The goat has had a kid, its offspring, and the milk is the source of life and nourishment. So they would do a very perverse thing. They would kill the mother goat.

They would kill the kid and they would take the goat's milk and they would boil the kid, which is the new goat, in this milk. They thought that this gave the milk magical properties. Then they would take buckets of it and they would go splash things with it.

It's kind of a perverse form of the sanctification that comes from the sprinkling of blood in the

rituals of Israel. Well, they used this goat's milk in which a baby goat had been boiled as their sanctifier, as their fertility splash. God says, you will not do this.

The milk is the nurture. It's the source of life. You will not kill that lion and do this perverse thing.

Your trust is not in magic. Your trust is in God. Secondly, this is an injunction to not become cruel.

This is cruelty. It is emblematic. It's an example of cruelty.

You might as well say, you will not fling kittens against brick walls. You will not set kerosene on a dog and light it on fires. We had somebody up in Plano, too, last year or the year before.

You will not poke the eyes out of somebody else's pet, as someone did up north of here a year or two ago. You will not go around shooting cats, as we have had someone in our community do not long ago. Treatment of animals here signifies cruelty.

God says, you will not be calloused. You will not be cruel. Do not develop a calloused, cruel heart and do not partake of the cruelty of the pagans that you are replacing in the land.

Well, this completes this section. We will begin next time in verse 20. God is going to make a prediction and make a promise about His care for them as they enter the land.

It is the concluding section, 2320-33, is the concluding of our twelve sections of this law as it is delivered to Israel. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word.

Thank you for illustrating for us so clearly through Israel how we should live our lives each day. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts, help us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight, that it is beneficial both now and in the age to come. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.