

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

Read **Exodus 23:1-9** – Matters of Judgment

**v.1** “THOU SHALT NOT RAISE A FALSE REPORT: PUT NOT THINE HAND WITH THE WICKED TO BE AN UNRIGHTEOUS WITNESS.”

The original language in this verse indicates that anyone who created, received or repeated a false report were all equally guilty under the law. God gives a warning through the Proverb writer:

**Proverbs 19:9** “A FALSE WITNESS SHALL NOT BE UNPUNISHED, AND HE THAT SPEAKETH LIES SHALL PERISH.”

This would include gossip, talebearing and anything else that would constitute a false report, false accusation, or speaking falsely against another person.

**v.2** “THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MULTITUDE TO *do* EVIL; NEITHER SHALT THOU SPEAK IN A CAUSE TO DECLINE AFTER MANY TO WREST *judgment*.”

The word translated multitude here actually has a meaning in the original language that can be applied two ways. First of all it addresses the common practice of many people today to imitate someone such as a sports figure, movie star, or prominent person in any category. The simple fact is that this is why these people are used to make commercials. They can also be someone among us. Jesus warned his disciples against the prominent religious leaders of his day:

**Matthew 23:2-3** “SAYING THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES' SEAT: ALL THEREFORE WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE, *that* OBSERVE AND DO; BUT DO NOT YE AFTER THEIR WORKS: FOR THEY SAY, AND DO NOT.”

The second application is the one that we hear most often. It is the one that warns us about who we associate with, who we count as friends, who in the world around us we allow to influence our lives. The very first verse of the first Psalm addresses this problem:

**Psalms 1:1** “BLESSED *is* THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY, NOR STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS, NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL.”

In the New Testament we are not left without similar instruction:

**I Corinthians 15:33** “BE NOT DECEIVED: EVIL COMPANIONSHIPS CORRUPT GOOD MORALS. (ASV)”

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

The second half of the verse speaks to supporting someone in a false accusation, conniving, creating a situation wherein an injustice is committed. The impetus is to support someone of power to defraud someone who is not.

**Deuteronomy 24:17** "THOU SHALT NOT WREST THE JUSTICE DUE TO THE SOJOURNER, OR TO THE FATHERLESS, *nor* TAKE THE WIDOW'S RAIMENT TO PLEDGE;(ASV)"

A classic example in the New Testament is that of Tertullus accusing Paul before Felix in Caesaria:

**Acts 24:5-6** "FOR WE HAVE FOUND THIS MAN A PESTILENT *fellow*, AND A MOVER OF INSURRECTIONS AMONG ALL THE JEWS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND A RINGLEADER OF THE SECT OF THE NAZARENES: WHO MOREOVER ASSAYED TO PROFANE THE TEMPLE: ON WHOM ALSO WE LAID HOLD: AND WE WOULD HAVE JUDGED HIM ACCORDING TO OUR LAW.(ASV)"

The very language of the one who spoke against Paul sounds much like the political spin doctors that we hear on our televisions every day.

**v.3** "NEITHER SHALT THOU COUNTENANCE A POOR MAN IN HIS CAUSE."

This simply gives them instruction that they are not to "WREST *judgment*" in favor of a poor man either.

**v.4** "IF YOU MEET YOUR ENEMY'S OX OR HIS DONKEY GOING ASTRAY, YOU SHALL SURELY BRING IT BACK TO HIM AGAIN."

We are always encouraged to do good. If someone, even an enemy, has animals going astray or has lost or misplaced something of value and we find it we are to return it. We are to be compassionate, merciful and kind to all men, regardless of their relationship to us:

**Colossians 3:17** "THEREFORE, AS *the* ELECT OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, PUT ON TENDER MERCIES, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING;"

**v.5** "IF YOU SEE THE DONKEY OF ONE WHO HATES YOU LYING UNDER ITS BURDEN, AND YOU WOULD REFRAIN FROM HELPING IT, YOU SHALL SURELY HELP HIM WITH IT."

If you see your enemy in trouble you are to help him. Jesus taught his disciples:

### **Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three**

**Matthew 5:44** “BUT I SAY TO YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU,”

**v.6** “YOU SHALL NOT PERVERT THE JUDGMENT OF YOUR POOR IN HIS DISPUTE.”

We are not to wrest or pervert judgment in any cause, no matter how sympathetic we might be with the claimant in his case. This follows closely the command in verse three and is underscored by verse 7.

**v.7** “KEEP YOURSELF FAR FROM A FALSE MATTER; DO NOT KILL THE INNOCENT AND RIGHTEOUS. FOR I WILL NOT JUSTIFY THE WICKED.”

With this verse we might reference a sermon that was presented here a few weeks ago to “KEEP THYSELF”. We are to stay away from any false matter, period or as Paul admonished Timothy:

**I Timothy 5:22** “DO NOT LAY HANDS ON ANYONE HASTILY, NOR SHARE IN OTHER PEOPLE’S SINS; KEEP YOURSELF PURE”

It also exhorts us to truthfulness, again as Paul wrote:

**Ephesians 4:25** “THEREFORE, PUTTING AWAY LYING, “*LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR,*” FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER.

The phrase in italics is a direct quote from **Zechariah 8:16**.

Israel is commanded not to kill the innocent, nor the righteous and that God will apply his justice to the wicked for:

“THE **LORD** EXECUTES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE FOR ALL WHO ARE OPPRESSED.” **Psalms 103:6**

**v.8** “AND YOU SHALL TAKE NO BRIBE, FOR A BRIBE BLINDS THE DISCERNING AND PERVERTS THE WORDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.”

We could not only include bribery in this command but as we look at the various translations and commentaries we can include all those things that we have softened from the word bribe to call conflict of interest. Bribery doesn’t have to be money. It can be power, favor or anything that would be of value to us. Here the scripture is talking primarily about judgment:

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

**Proverbs 17:23** “A WICKED *man* ACCEPTS A BRIBE BEHIND THE BACK. TO PERVERT THE WAYS OF JUSTICE.”

**v.9** “ALSO YOU SHALL NOT OPPRESS A STRANGER, FOR YOU KNOW THE HEART OF A STRANGER, BECAUSE YOU WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

Israel was not to oppress a stranger, **Deuteronomy 24:14** also applies this command to a slave or hired servant. God condemns oppression of any kind and reminds us through the writer of:

**Proverbs 14:31** “HE WHO OPPRESSES THE POOR REPROACHES HIS MAKER, BUT HE WHO HONORS HIM HAS MERCY ON THE NEEDY.”

The man who oppresses another is a reproach to God.

Read **Exodus 23:10-13** – The Laws of the Sabbath

**v.10** “SIX YEARS YOU SHALL SOW YOUR LAND AND GATHER IN ITS PRODUCE.”

This deals with the establishment of what is called the Sabbatical Year. Just as in the case of slaves or servants, who were to go free after the sixth years of their service, the land also was to be rested for a year every six years.

**v.11** “BUT THE SEVENTH *year* YOU SHALL LET IT REST AND LIE FALLOW, THAT THE POOR OF YOUR PEOPLE MAY EAT; AND WHAT THEY LEAVE, THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD MAY EAT. IN LIKE MANNER YOU SHALL DO WITH YOUR VINEYARD *and* YOUR OLIVE GROVE.”

Fields, vineyards and olive grove were to lie fallow during the seventh year. Of course the vineyards and olive groves would continue to produce, though perhaps not as well as when trimmed, worked and given proper care. Whatever grew was to be left for the poor and finally for the beasts of the field. This commandment is repeated:

**Leviticus 25:4** “BUT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR THERE SHALL BE A SABBATH OF SOLEMN REST FOR THE LAND, A SABBATH TO THE **LORD**. YOU SHALL NEITHER SOW YOUR FIELD NOR PRUNE YOUR VINEYARD.”

This practice was commanded for the purpose of honoring God and I'm sure that by his providence Israel did not suffer or lack for food if they obeyed this command.

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

**v.12** “SIX DAYS YOU SHALL DO YOUR WORK, AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY YOU SHALL REST, THAT YOUR OX AND YOUR DONKEY MAY REST, AND THE SON OF YOUR FEMALE SERVANT AND THE STRANGER MAY BE REFRESHED.”

From the Sabbatical Year we go to the commandment regarding the Sabbath Day. Not only was the children of Israel to rest but their work animals, servants and slaves were to be given a day of rest as well. One of the charges brought against Israel just prior to their captivity in Babylon was:

“YOU HAVE DESPISED **MY** HOLY THINGS AND PROFANED MY SABBATHS”  
**Ezekiel 22:8**

So Israel did not honor God’s holy day any better than folks honor God or our day of worship today.

**v.13** “AND IN ALL THAT I HAVE SAID TO YOU, BE CIRCUMSPECT AND MAKE NO MENTION OF THE NAME OF OTHER GODS, NOR LET IT BE HEARD FROM YOUR MOUTH.”

What does the word “CIRCUMSPECT” mean? In a modern dictionary it means to be careful, be cautious, be watchful. In other words, be on guard that you don’t even mention the names of other gods. God has already told them that he is a jealous God:

**Exodus 20:5** “YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM NOR SERVE THEM. FOR I, THE **LORD** YOUR GOD, *am* A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH *generations* OF THOSE WHO HATE ME,”

And those who throw him over for another god, whether it be an idol or anything else that man might worship we have the same warning. Paul asks the Corinthians:

“OR DO WE PROVOKE THE LORD TO JEALOUSY? ARE WE STRONGER THAN HE?” **I Corinthians 10:22**

Read **Exodus 23:14-19** – Three Annual Feasts

**v.14** “THREE TIMES YOU SHALL KEEP A FEAST TO ME IN THE YEAR.”

These three feasts were to be celebrated wherever the tabernacle or the temple was located. Before the building of the temple by Solomon the tabernacle was the center of Hebrew worship, after the building of the temple they were always held in Jerusalem. All Hebrew or Jewish males were to present themselves before God at all three of these feasts each year.

### Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

**v.15** “YOU SHALL KEEP THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (YOU SHALL EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD SEVEN DAYS, AS I COMMANDED YOU, AT THE TIME APPOINTED IN THE MONTH OF ABIB, FOR IN IT YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT; NONE SHALL APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY);”

The feast of unleavened bread began with the feast of the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Abib and lasted until the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month. We have the record of God’s commandment in:

**Exodus 12:18** “IN THE FIRST *month*, ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH AT EVENING, YOU SHALL EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD, UNTIL THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH AT EVENING.”

We also note that the commandment declares that “NONE SHALL APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY”. This was also a time when offerings were to be made to God in the form of a monetary contribution in addition to the sacrifices offered in worship. This is the reason for the “MONEYCHANGERS” in the temple:

**Matthew 21:12** “THEN JESUS WENT INTO THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND DROVE OUT ALL THOSE WHO BOUGHT AND SOLD IN THE TEMPLE, AND OVERTURNED THE TABLES OF THE MONEY CHANGERS AND THE SEATS OF THOSE WHO SOLD DOVES.”

Those who had traveled from far countries to the feasts in Jerusalem had to exchange their currency for the temple shekels in order to not “APPEAR BEFORE” God, “EMPTY.”

**v.16** “AND THE FEAST OF HARVEST, THE FIRSTFRUITS OF YOUR LABORS WHICH YOU HAVE SOWN IN THE FIELD; AND THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE END OF THE YEAR, WHEN YOU HAVE GATHERED IN *the fruit of* YOUR LABORS FROM THE FIELD.”

The feast of the harvest was also called Pentecost and the Feast of Weeks because it fell 7 weeks after the Passover. It also corresponded with the end of the wheat harvest in the Middle East and since it fell in late May or early June it also corresponds to the harvest of winter grain in Missouri where we harvested barley, rye and winter wheat at about that same time. It was timed to commemorate the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. It was a time of worship:

**Numbers 28:26** “ALSO ON THE DAY OF THE FIRSTFRUITS, WHEN YOU BRING A NEW GRAIN OFFERING TO HE LORD AT YOUR *Feast of* WEEKS, YOU SHALL HAVE A HOLY CONVOCATION. YOU SHALL DO NO CUSTOMARY WORK.”

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

As we have been taught under the Mosaic Law the children were commanded to tithe but that was not the only measure of offering to the Lord. At the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost they were commanded to do their giving with the same words that we are today:

**Deuteronomy 16:10** "THEN YOU SHALL KEEP THE FEAST OF WEEKS TO THE **LORD** YOUR GOD WITH THE TRIBUTE OF A FREEWILL OFFERING FROM YOUR HAND, WHICH YOU SHALL GIVE AS THE **LORD** YOUR GOD BLESSES YOU."

They were to give as God had blessed them or as God had prospered them, just as we are commanded in I Corinthians 16:2.

The third feast that all Israelite males were to attend annually was the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the Jewish year. It was also called the Feast of the Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. It was held from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October on our calendar and served two purposes. It was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest and they were to live in booths, tents or dwellings outside of their homes:

**Leviticus 23:41-42** "YOU SHALL KEEP IT AS A FEAST TO THE **LORD** FOR SEVEN DAYS IN THE YEAR. *It shall be* A STATUTE FOREVER IN YOUR GENERATIONS. YOU SHALL CELEBRATE IT IN THE SEVENTH MONTH. YOU SHALL DWELL IN BOOTHS FOR SEVEN DAYS. ALL WHO ARE NATIVE ISRAELITES SHALL DWELL IN BOOTHS,"

Who remembers the reason that they were to dwell in booths?

**Leviticus 23:43** "THAT YOUR GENERATIONS MAY KNOW THAT I MADE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DWELL IN BOOTHS WHEN I BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT: I *am* THE **LORD** YOUR GOD."

**v.17** "THREE TIMES IN THE YEAR ALL YOUR MALES SHALL APPEAR BEFORE THE **LORD GOD**."

As we noted in the study of verse 14, all males were to be present in these times of worship to God.

**v.18** "YOU SHALL NOT OFFER THE BLOOD OF MY SACRIFICE WITH LEAVENED BREAD; NOR SHALL THE FAT OF MY SACRIFICE REMAIN UNTIL MORNING."

Two prohibitions appear in this command. First of all, not only was the bread used in the Feast of the Unleavened Bread to be without leaven, no sacrifice was to be made to God with leavened bread. Knowing this it should not be a wonder to anyone why that we today also observe the Lord's Supper with unleavened bread. It is God's command, not only under the Mosaic Law but also under the Law of Christ.

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

Second any fat presented as a burnt offering or as any offering was not to remain over night. God doesn't give a reason for this command but understanding the climate of Israel, it probably would have already begun to spoil if left overnight.

We also note again that God specifies how and when he should be worshipped.

**v.19** "THE FIRST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS OF YOUR LAND YOU SHALL BRING INTO THE HOUSE OF THE **LORD** YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL NOT BOIL A YOUNG GOAT IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK."

There are two commandments that we have seen before and throughout the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy God repeats many of his commandments again and again. Under the Mosaic Covenant God demanded the first of everything:

**Exodus 22:29** "YOU SHALL NOT DELAY *to offer* THE FIRST OF YOUR RIPE PRODUCE AND YOUR JUICES. THE FIRSTBORN OF YOUR SONS YOU SHALL GIVE TO ME."

Under the Law of Christ He demands our entire being, **Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1.**

When the Israelites prepared to observe the Passover feast and leave Egypt God commanded them not to boil their meat like the Egyptians did.

**Exodus 12:9** "DO NOT EAT IT RAW, NOR BOILED AT ALL WITH WATER, BUT ROASTED IN FIRE—ITS HEAD WITH ITS LEGS AND ITS ENTRAILS."

Read **Exodus 23:20-33** – God's Angel and Promises

**v.20** "BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL BEFORE YOU TO KEEP YOU IN THE WAY AND TO BRING YOU INTO THE PLACE WHICH I HAVE PREPARED."

God promises Israel an Angel, a guardian to keep them "IN THE WAY" and guide them to "THE PLACE", "PREPARED" for them. The Hebrew word for angel is *mai'akh* and means one going or one sent, a messenger. It seems that God here is reminding them that He has given them an angel to lead and guard them because we read in:

**Exodus 14:19** "AND THE ANGEL OF GOD, WHO WENT BEFORE THE CAMP OF ISRAEL, MOVED AND WENT BEHIND THEM; AND THE PILLAR OF CLOUD WENT FROM BEFORE THEM AND STOOD BEHIND THEM."

Some contend that this Angel of God was actually Moses but nothing in scripture that I found supports that notion and it stands in direct conflict with the verse just read. We also see that this angel had special authority:



### **Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three**

**v.21** “BEWARE OF HIM AND OBEY HIS VOICE; DO NOT PROVOKE HIM, FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS; FOR MY NAME *is* IN HIM.”

Israel is warned not to disobey him, not to provoke this angel because he did not have the power to forgive their transgressions. The implication is that punishment would be swift and sure. He would be serving with the name of God in him or as we see in the New Testament “IN THE NAME OF THE LORD”, carrying out God’s purpose with all of the authority from on high that was needed.

**v.22** “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 ADVERSARIES.”

If Israel obeys the messenger of God, hears his voice then God will provide them with divine protection. God has always protected those who honor and obey Him. David writes:

**Psalms 34:7** “THE ANGEL OF THE **LORD** ENCAMPS ALL AROUND THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, AND DELIVERS THEM.”

**v.23** “FOR MY ANGEL WILL GO BEFORE YOU AND BRING YOU IN TO THE AMORITES AND THE HITTITES AND THE PERIZZITES AND THE CANAANITES AND THE HIVITES AND THE JEBUSITES; AND I WILL CUT THEM OFF.”

God renews the promise that he had first made to Abraham:

**Genesis 12:6-7** “ABRAM PASSED THROUGH THE LAND TO THE PLACE OF SHECHEM, AS FAR AS THE TEREBINTH TREE OF MOREH. AND THE CANAANITES *were* THEN IN THE LAND. THEN THE **LORD** APPEARED TO ABRAM AND SAID, “TO YOUR DESCENDANTS I WILL GIVE THIS LAND.” AND THERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE **LORD**, WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIM.”

God also promised to “CUT OFF” the Canaanite people, destroy them because of their abominations. God, who does not change, will do likewise to men of all nations and all generations. David writes:

**Psalms 37:38** “BUT THE TRANSGRESSORS SHALL BE DESTROYED TOGETHER; THE FUTURE OF THE WICKED SHALL BE CUT OFF.”

Not only in this life but in the next as well.

### Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

**v.24** “YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEIR GODS, NOR SERVE THEM, NOR DO ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS; BUT YOU SHALL UTTERLY OVERTHROW THEM AND COMPLETELY BREAK DOWN THEIR **sacred** PILLARS.”

God had already commanded Israel not to make or worship any image:

**Exodus 20:4** “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE—ANY LIKENESS OF **anything** THAT **is** IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT **is** IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT **is** IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH;”

Now he makes a specific application to the gods of the Canaanites.

**v.25** “SO YOU SHALL SERVE THE **LORD** YOUR GOD, AND HE WILL BLESS YOUR BREAD AND YOUR WATER. AND I WILL TAKE SICKNESS AWAY FROM THE MIDST OF YOU.”

In their new home God will continue to bless Israel just as he had done in the land of Goshen:

**Genesis 47:27** “SO ISRAEL DWELT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, IN THE COUNTRY OF GOSHEN; AND THEY HAD POSSESSIONS THERE AND GREW AND MULTIPLIED EXCEEDINGLY.”

God had promised them earlier that if they were obedient children that he would inflict them with the diseases of the land of Egypt:

**Exodus 15:26** “AND SAID, “IF YOU DILIGENTLY HEED THE VOICE OF THE **LORD** YOUR GOD AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS SIGHT, GIVE EAR TO HIS COMMANDMENTS AND KEEP ALL HIS STATUTES, I WILL PUT NONE OF THE DISEASES ON YOU WHICH I HAVE BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS. FOR I **am** THE **LORD** WHO HEALS YOU.”

**v.26** “NO ONE SHALL SUFFER MISCARRIAGE OR BE BARREN IN YOUR LAND; I WILL FULFILL THE NUMBER OF YOUR DAYS.”

In addition to good health, the Israelite women would not be barren and would carry their children to term. All Israel would also be granted greater longevity than the world around them.

**v.27** ““I WILL SEND MY FEAR BEFORE YOU, I WILL CAUSE CONFUSION AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE TO WHOM YOU COME, AND WILL MAKE ALL YOUR ENEMIES TURN **their** BACKS TO YOU.”

### **Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three**

God will put fear in the hearts of the Canaanites and consequently they will not be able to fight effectively against Israel. He will also sow confusion among them also rendering them ineffective as a fighting force. Consequently Israel will see their backs as they flee the wrath of God being meted out by His chosen people.

**v.28** “AND I WILL SEND HORNETS BEFORE YOU, WHICH SHALL DRIVE OUT THE HIVITE, THE CANAANITE, AND THE HITTITE FROM BEFORE YOU.”

The hornet is a evil-tempered little member of the wasp family. They are more aggressive than an ordinary red wasp. A swarm of them, if in large numbers, could indeed rout an army and did:

**Joshua 24:12** “I SENT THE HORNET BEFORE YOU WHICH DROVE THEM OUT FROM BEFORE YOU, *also* THE TWO KINGS OF THE AMORITES, *but* NOT WITH YOUR SWORD OR WITH YOUR BOW.”

Joshua reminds Israel that these two kings were conquered, not by the might of Israel, her sword or bow but rather by the tools of God; one of which is the hornet.

**v.29** “I WILL NOT DRIVE THEM OUT FROM BEFORE YOU IN ONE YEAR, LEST THE LAND BECOME DESOLATE AND THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD BECOME TOO NUMEROUS FOR YOU.”

God will drive the Canaanites out of the land over a period of time. This would keep the “BEASTS OF THE FIELD” from overrunning an empty land or the land becoming desolate and unproductive due to neglect.

**v.30** “LITTLE BY LITTLE I WILL DRIVE THEM OUT FROM BEFORE YOU, UNTIL YOU HAVE INCREASED, AND YOU INHERIT THE LAND.”

This time would also allow Israel to occupy and fill the land, lest they being too scattered would themselves fall victim to an ambitious king or people.

**v.31** “AND I WILL SET YOUR BOUNDS FROM THE RED SEA TO THE SEA, PHILISTIA, AND FROM THE DESERT TO THE RIVER. FOR I WILL DELIVER THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND INTO YOUR HAND, AND YOU SHALL DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE YOU.”

Perhaps the best depiction of the geographical limits of God’s promise is the actual kingdom of David and Solomon. David came the closest of actually conquering all of the land that God promised Israel. See map.

**v.32** “YOU SHALL MAKE NO COVENANT WITH THEM, NOR WITH THEIR GODS.”

## Exodus Chapter Twenty-Three

As we have discussed before Israel was not to associate themselves with the Canaanite people in any way. God knew that if they did then they would become corrupted with their idol worship and worldly ways. But Israel, even Joshua a man of God made a covenant with them almost as soon as they had conquered Jericho and Ai. Why did they do that?

**Joshua 9:14-15** “THEN THE MEN OF ISRAEL TOOK SOME OF THEIR PROVISIONS; BUT THEY DID NOT ASK COUNSEL OF THE LORD. SO JOSHUA MADE PEACE WITH THEM, AND MADE A COVENANT WITH THEM TO LET THEM LIVE; AND THE RULERS OF THE CONGREGATION SWORE TO THEM.”

“THEY DID NOT ASK COUNSEL OF THE **LORD**”; they did what they thought best rather than asking God for His assistance in the matter and consequently made fools of themselves. This mistake lived with them until the kingdom of David.

**v.33** “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.”

And as we know the Canaanite people became much more than a snare to Israel. Their influence was the primary reason behind the eventually downfall of Israel.