



Exodus 22:21-23:33

LIVING OUT THE LAW'S PRIORITIES

The second part of the Book of the Covenant consists of miscellaneous social, ethical, moral, and religious prescriptions that are predominantly couched in the concise, apodictic style of the Ten Commandments... They constitute normative standards for controlling human conduct, standards imposed by a transcendent divine will. Their enforcement is left to the individual conscience, not to political institutions... In these laws, heavy emphasis is placed on the concern for the unfortunates of society. The stranger must not be wronged; the widow and orphan may not be abused... As imperatives of the divine will, they become self-imposed and self-enforcing duties. The sole motive power for moral rectitude lies in the conviction that divine sanction authorizes these demands... The sacredness of human life is paramount in its value system. That is why the Torah places so much emphasis on the plight of the poor and on the condition of the disadvantaged of society, and why it exhibits so much concern for the slave and the alien.

—Nahum Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*

The Ten Commandments provide the overall governing principles of God's law. The **Book of the Covenant** (Ex. 21-23) details some of the ways in which these principles were applied in specific situations.

- A. Obeying & Worshiping God Alone (20:22-26)
- B. Laws Dealing with Relationship with Others (21:1-27)
 - C. Laws Dealing with Property & Restitution (21:28-22:17)
 - D. Abominations in the Land (22:18-20)
 - C. Laws Dealing with the Poor & Disadvantaged (22:21-23:9)
 - B. Laws Dealing with Relationship with God (23:10-19)
- A. Obeying & Worshiping God Alone (23:20-33)

Laws indicate what is valued in a society. They reveal the priorities of the culture. They teach what is most sacred for people to protect.

THE PRIORITY OF LOVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR (22:21-23:9)

- A. Don't mistreat a foreigner (22:21)
- B. Don't oppress the widow or orphan (22:22-24)
- C. Show compassion to your neighbor (22:25-27)
 - D. Don't curse God or your leaders (22:28)
 - E. Give what is best to God (22:29-30)
 - F. You shall be holy people to Me (22:31a)
 - E. Throw what is worthless to the dogs (22:31b)
 - D. Don't follow the crowd (23:1-3)
 - C. Show compassion to your enemy (23:4-5)
 - B. Don't pervert justice against the poor (23:6-8)
- A. Don't mistreat a foreigner (23:9)

- Be _____ from the world around you.

Stranger. Heb., *ger*, "a foreigner, alien, sojourner, guest."

Do you know that being a stranger is the hardest thing that can happen to any one in all this world?

—Gene Stratton-Porter

God's goal in saving you was not just to make your few years on planet Earth easier or more enjoyable. He had an eternal end in view. His intent was to make you holy, as He is holy, that you might perfectly glorify Him, that you might bring Him pleasure, and that you might enjoy intimate fellowship with Him for all eternity.

—Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Holy. Heb., *qodesh*, "sacredness; set-apartness; separateness."

Holiness is not just about purity or discipline. It is about displaying your radical difference, showing the marks of God's ownership, and illustrating through your behavior the unusualness of your new life in Christ.

—Jim Elliff

- Give God your _____.
- Do what is right, regardless of the _____.
- Show love and compassion to all, even to your _____.
- Don't mistreat or take advantage of the weak and vulnerable.
- Always remember God's _____ in saving you.

Do justly. A government must enforce laws and protect its borders.
Love mercy. A people must love the vulnerable in their community.
Walk humbly. A balance is only achieved through humility and prayer.

THE PRIORITY OF WORSHIP AND REST (23:10-19)

- Rest the _____ every seven years.
- Refresh _____ every seven days.
- Rejoice in the _____ throughout the year.
- Reject the _____ of false religion.

Don't boil a young goat in its mother's milk. (23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21)

THE PRIORITY OF THE MESSENGER AND THE PROMISE (23:20-33)

- God's _____ will bring them into the land.
- God's _____ will sustain them in the land.

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.
 —Hebrews 4:8-11

"Love your enemies" is not a sentiment found only in the NT... What is right, not how one feels, determines behavior. —Peter Enns

The Torah enjoins people to have compassion on the poor, but this should not lead to the perversion or distortion of justice [23:3]. If it did, it would be a case of reverse prejudice. —John D. Currid

This is not mere humanitarianism, but a deep fellow-feeling rooted in our own experience of God's grace. We are to treat others as the Lord has treated us. —Robert Rayburn

Refresh. Heb., *naphash*, "to take a breath; to be refreshed (as if by a current of air)." Used 3x in the OT.

The Seven Feasts of Israel

1. Passover (Nisan 14)
2. Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15-21)
3. Firstfruits (after sabbath of Passover)
4. Weeks (50 days after Firstfruits)
5. Trumpets (Tishri 1)
6. Day of Atonement (Tishri 10)
7. Tabernacles (Tishri 15-21)

*According to the **Birth of the Gods** [an ancient Canaanite text], a kid was cooked in its mother's milk to procure the fertility of the fields, which were sprinkled with the substance which resulted.*

—Arthur Samuel Peake

Hornet. Heb., *tsir'ah*, "wasp, that which stings or strikes." Only used in Ex 23:28; Deut 7:20; Josh 24:12.

Angel. Hebrew, *malak*, "one sent; a messenger or representative." Used 214x in the OT to describe prophets (2 Chr. 36:15-16), priests (Mal. 2:7), human messengers (Gen. 32:3), angels (Gen. 32:1), and the pre-incarnate Christ, i.e., God's messenger (Gen. 16:10; 22:11).