

Handout: Exodus Lesson 11

The prohibition against idolatry followed by instruction on the proper forms of worship in Ex 20:22-26 is repeated in 23:13-19. These themes will frame forty-two (7 = spiritual perfection x 6 = number symbolic of man) covenant judgments in Exodus 21:1-23:12, providing a prologue and an epilog to the forty-two judgments. The judgment section, which is the beginning of “The Book of the Covenant” begins with the Hebrew words “And these”, the gematria of which is the number 42.

Idolatry prohibition and proper forms of worship Ex 20:22-26	42 judgments Ex 21:1-23:12	Idolatry prohibition and proper forms of worship Ex 23:13-19
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(inspired by a chart in Sailhamer, *Exodus*, page 289).

Scripture passages in the Pentateuch that refer to the events of the Exodus experience being written down for future generations: Ex 17:17; 24:4, 17; 28:58; 29:20-21, 28; 30:10; 31:24.

Ex 21:2-24:18 is called “The Book of the Covenant.” It can be divided into four parts:

1. Exodus 21:2-22:16: Relates to civil and criminal matters. These laws are not presented as abstract legal principles but as specific rulings on hypothetical cases whose rulings are to be the jurisdiction of the courts. An important addition is the statement of imposed punishments equal to the damage caused.
2. Exodus 22:17-23:19: Encompasses a wide variety of topics but the main focus is on humanitarian considerations which are not enforced by the courts but are left to the disposition of the individual’s conscience, assuming the individual is committed to a life of holiness dictated by divine law.
3. Exodus 23:20-33: Affirms Yahweh’s divine promises to His covenant people and warnings of the dangers being seduced by paganism.
4. Exodus 24:1-18: The ritual of covenant ratification.

The Book of the Covenant ends with Moses’ call to the mountain summit to receive instructions for worship and the two tablets of the covenant treaty document.

The two stone tablets of the covenant treaty document (Dt 4:13), the Decalogue, words written with the finger of God (Ex 34:28) on the tablets front and back (Ex 32:15), were placed inside the Ark of the Covenant/Ark of the Testimony (Ex 31:26; 40:20; Dt 10:2) while the law of the Book of the Covenant was placed beside the Ark (Dt 31:24).

Differences between the Law of the Sinai Covenant and the Code of Hammurabi:

1. Judgments and verdicts were not determined by social class in the Law of the Sinai Covenant as they were in the Code of Hammurabi.
2. The whole tone of the Sinai Covenant is religious—civil law is determined by and cannot be separated from religious principles based on the holiness of Yahweh (Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7-8), the oneness of Yahweh (Ex 20:3; 22:20; Dt 6:4-5), and the unchangeableness of Yahweh (Num 23:19-20; Mal 3:6).
3. The orientation of the Code of Hammurabi has an economic and cultural focus as the basis for governing a moral and ethical society: there are numerous laws governing the duties and rights of soldiers, regulating trade and merchants, laws concerning adoption, physicians, boat builders, house builders, etc.

Handout 2: Exodus Lesson 11

Covenant Treaty formulary in chapters 20-23 of Exodus:

Part I: Preamble (Ex 20:1-2a)

Part II: Historical Prologue (Ex 20:2b)

Part III: Ethical Stipulations (Ex 20:3-23:19)

Part IV: Sanctions (Ex 23:20-33)

Part V: to be continued

Each of the three Pilgrim feasts is associated with reliving the Exodus experience and with offering God the first fruits of the harvest:

1. Feast of Unleavened Bread – remembering the eating of the first sacred meal of the Passover and the barley harvest in the early spring.
2. Feast of Weeks – remembering the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, the formation of the Sinai Covenant and the wheat harvest at the end of spring.
3. Feast of Shelters/Tabernacles – remembering the building of the Sanctuary at Sinai and the grape and fig harvest in the fall.

Scripture passages identifying the Pilgrim feasts: Ex 23:14-19; 34:18-23; Dt 16:16-17; 2 Chr 8:13.

Covenant treat part IV: Sanctions (Exodus 23:20-33)

Promised Blessings
1. God's messenger will lead Israel to victory over her enemies
2. God will bless them food and water
3. He will keep them free from sickness
4. No woman will miscarry
5. Every woman will be fertile
6. He will drive away all their enemies
7. He will drive their enemies out little by little until Israel has sufficient strength
8. He promised generous boundaries

The blessings are double the warnings:

Warnings to avoid judgments
1. Revere God's messenger/angel and obey him.
2. Do not defy him; he will not forgive any wrong-doing.
3. You will make no covenant treaties with any of the inhabitants of Canaan or their gods.
4. The inhabitants of Canaan may not stay in the land; you must drive them out or they will become a snare for you, making you sin by serving their gods.