

Exodus 23:14-33

Celebration, Obedience and Blessings

“For three chapters God has been giving his people his law for their lives in the form of a covenant, such as was common in those days. First he gave them a history lesson recounting how he had saved them out of Egypt. This was to remind them that they owed him their very lives and thus also their obedience. God had a right to tell them not to serve other gods, make idols, dishonor his name, murder, steal, or break any of his other commandments. He was Israel’s Savior, so the Israelites had to honor him as their Lord. He was their God; they were his people. This is what the Bible means by covenant: a sacred relationship, established by God, in which God belongs to his people and his people belong to him.” Ryken

- I. From the birth of Moses on, what God was doing with the Israelites was establishing a loving, caring, faithful relationship with them as their personal God. After 400 years of slavery, He was waking them up in awesome ways to His existence as the one and only true God who picked them out of all the people of the earth to be His very own cherished possession. They had never, in their lifetime, seen such a display of His glory as the God they had heard about throughout the generations of their existence in Egypt. Yet would that be good enough to move them to take him to heart and love him with deep sincere adoration and reverence, or would they, like the church of Ephesus that Jesus passed judgment on in the Rev. 2, make him into nothing more than a formality of obedience to his covenant stipulations? Would they see that what God was doing was shaping and forming them into a Christlike people for their spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing? Would they see the extent God was willing to go to bless them? God’s covenant stipulations were meant to keep the people of Israel God honoring, safe, honest, just, and loving toward one another which God was very concerned in establishing, knowing that *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer. 17:9).*

Rev. 2:1-5

Deut. 7:6-8

Eph. 1:3-6 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

II. *Celebration is a vital part of the Christian life. It is an expression of gratitude, joy, and reverence for God’s blessings, faithfulness, and sovereignty. Throughout the Bible, we see numerous instances where God’s people are called to celebrate—whether it’s through feasts, songs, dances, or simply giving thanks. Celebration is not just a response to personal blessings but also a way to honor God’s work in creation, redemption, and the fulfillment of His promises... Celebration is woven into the fabric of the Christian faith. It is a response to God’s goodness, a reflection of His joy, and a foretaste of the eternal rejoicing that awaits us in His presence (Wilson).*

Ex. 23:14-19

Lev. 23:16

châgag, khaw-gag'; properly, to move in a circle, i.e. (specifically) to march in a sacred procession, to observe a festival; by implication, to be giddy:—celebrate, dance, (keep, hold) a (solemn) feast (holiday), reel to and fro. Strong’s Concordance

Feast of Unleavened Bread - “Celebrated from 15th through the 21st days of the first month (usually about mid-March to mid-April...) at the beginning of the barley harvest; it commemorated the Exodus.”

Feast of Harvest, aka “Feast of Weeks” “because was held seven weeks after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was celebrated on the sixth day of the third month (usually about mid-May to mid-June) during the wheat harvest. In later Judaism it came to commemorate the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, though there is no evidence of this significance in the OT. In NT times it was called (the day of) Pentecost” (Ac 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8), which means “50.”

Feast of Ingathering, aka “Feast of Tabernacles” (Lev. 23:24). It was celebrated from the 15th through the 22nd days of the seventh month (usually about mid-September to mid-October) when the produce of the orchards and vines had been harvested; it commemorated the desert wanderings after the exodus.

III. There wasn’t one thing God wasn’t willing to do for the Israelites to assure their safety and prosperity throughout their pilgrimage to the Promised Land. He even promised to send an angel, a Christophany, i.e., Christ Himself, ahead of them to guard their way. All they had to do was pay attention to Him, listen to Him and obey what He said. He promised victory in battle, a land without enemies, abundant food and water, no sickness, every married woman with child, no miscarriages, and long life. God’s Word was very clear on what was required of His covenant people to assure His blessings upon them. He was also very clear on what their disobedience would mean for them; therefore they were without excuse. The major difference between the Israelites and born again believers is that the covenant we entered into with God through His Son is unconditional. Guzik states, “*Under the New Covenant we operate on a different principle. Though there are inevitable consequences of sin and God’s loving correction for disobedience, we are blessed in Jesus, and not because we have been obedient (Ephesians 1:3).*” Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Ex. 23:20-33

1 Cor. 10:3-4

James 1:13-15

Eph. 1:3

Hosea 6:6

Joshua 24:12-13

1 Cor. 15:57

Ps. 20:7

2 Cor. 3:18

Gen. 15:18-19

