

## **MISHPATIM (Judgments)**

### **EXODUS (SHEMOT 21:1 – 24:18)**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. This portion details the ordinances or judgments given to Israel – not to the nations at large.
  - a. These are predominately considered civil ordinances strictly given to Israel.
  - b. That is not to say that the principles inherent in these laws wouldn't work for all.
2. In Western culture a distinction would be made between civil law and religious law.
  - a. In God's economy they are one and the same; no separation of church and state.
  - b. Torah is a matter of the heart that is to influence and affect our daily conduct.
  - c. Frankly, this principle was inherent in the founding of America as well.
3. These commands are not to be considered secondary to the other commandments.
  - a. They too are an expression of God's Will just as "You shall not murder."
  - b. In fact, the first *mishpat* has relationship to the first of the Ten Commands.
  - c. Laws of bondservant linked to "I am the LORD who brought you out of Egypt."
  - d. Which in turn is linked to the first and great command, "Love the LORD your God."
4. Likewise, many of the *mishpatim* deal with how you treat another's property.
  - a. To disregard another's property and their rights synonymous with breaking Shabbat.
  - b. These decrees would be linked to the command, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

#### **CHAPTER 21: LAWS OF THE BONDSERVANT**

**"Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them" – Exodus 21:1**

1. V 1: Could be rendered "**And** these are the judgments..." meaning they are connected to the Ten Commands given in the previous chapter.
  - a. Again emphasizing there is no demarcation between the Decalogue and these.
  - b. All His commands disclose His Will whether to the nation or the individual.
  - c. Whether to the physical aspects of life or the spiritual; they are all connected.
2. V 1: "Which you shall set before them" – meaning that Moses was to teach their meaning.
  - a. More than just pronouncing them; he must take time to help them understand.
  - b. Implying that they were to internalize these instructions; more than something written.
3. I would suggest that these *mishpatim* were given in direct response to their desire for Moses to speak to God and relay the needed information to them.
  - a. Remember, God had agreed with the words of the people.
  - b. Now He begins to give to Moses what he is to relay to the people.
  - c. They are to internalize these instructions, implying they truly are to "hear and obey."
  - d. But did they? Intriguing question in light of what was the first of these *mishpatim*.

**"If you buy a Hebrew servant [Heb. עֶבֶד *eved*], he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself." – Exodus 21:2-4**

4. First of all, how did a Hebrew become someone's servant?
  - a. He could sell himself to escape extreme poverty (Lev. 25:39).
  - b. A thief who is sold by the court to generate funds to pay his victims.
5. It seems strange that the ordinances given should begin with one concerning servitude.
  - a. Should note that slavery permitted by Torah much different than in Greece or Rome.
  - b. The slave/servant was not a "thing" but a human being; this ordinance emphasizes this.
  - c. To mistreat a servant/slave resulted in his immediate release (Ex. 21:26).
  - d. Interesting that this command addressed rights of the lowest in social pecking order.
  - e. Which is why, perhaps, it was the first one situation to be addressed.
6. Remember, Y'shua said:

**"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." – Matthew 19:30**

7. On the surface, it seems odd that the instructions the people asked for and to which they agreed to obey, begin with the laws of the *eved* or servant, better "bondservant."
  - a. Considering what transpired, wouldn't He choose some other important command?
  - b. On the other hand, perhaps a test to see if they will indeed "hear" and then obey.
  - c. In doing it is still possible not to hear; in doing it is possible not to internalize.
8. This statute is the first *mishpat*: compare with the first of the ten commandments?

**"I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." - Exodus 20:2**

9. This is first commandment because if established in one's heart, all others fall into place.
  - a. Notice the emphasis: I'm the one who brought you out of bondage.
  - b. Compare with the laws of the bondservant – the master releases him.
  - c. Yet, what did Israel do and say when Moses did not return? The Golden Calf.
  - d. This first commandment is certainly linked to the first *mishpat*.
10. Now what is the **first** command? Notice what Y'shua says:

**"Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?' Y'shua answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.' So the scribe said to Him, 'Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' "** - Mark 12:28-33

11. This is the first and greatest of commands and so notice what has to happen to fulfill?
  - a. Must HEAR O Israel not see O Israel!
  - b. No one has seen God but we can hear Him and this is most important.
  - c. Hearing leads to balance and that is the only way to stand upright and walk straight.

- d. This accentuates the need to truly hear with our hearts and not just our ears.
- 12. This is integral to faith for we know that “faith comes by hearing ...” (Romans 10:17).
- 13. The first and great command, along with first commandment, linked to the first *mishpat*.
  - a. That this law comes first, and connected to first command, suggests something.
  - b. Remember, Israel was motivated to say “we will hear and do” by – FEAR!
  - c. Certainly God wants His people to fear Him so that we will not sin.
  - d. Does he want to serve only by fear? There must be balance.
- 14. The first command is to “Love the LORD your God.”
  - a. First commandment reminds us of the One who set us free from our bondage.
  - b. The first *mishpat*: bondservant comes to master to serve forever because of love.

**“But if the servant plainly [alt. “firmly”] says, ‘I love my master [Heb. אהבתי את אדני *ahavti et adoni*], my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.’ ” - Exodus 21:5**

- 15. A true servant simply obeys His master because he loves him.
  - a. Perhaps this was the intended message all along; not so much about having a slave.
  - b. Followers of Messiah regarded themselves as “bondservants.”
  - c. Paul referred to himself as “bondservant” on many occasions; e.g. Rom. 1:1
- 16. The word for servant or “bondservant” is *eved*; this is not a hireling.
  - a. This is the same word, used as a verb, to describe what Adam was to do in the garden.
  - b. He was to “work” as a bondservant.
  - c. This suggests that, from the beginning, this is what the Father has desired.
- 17. After SIX years, he is to be released and is free to go HIS OWN WAY.
  - a. Exception would be if Yovel occurs before the sixth year; release would be then.
  - b. Otherwise, his release in sixth year is to remind of release from Egyptian bondage.
  - c. The refusal to abide by this command would result in national exile (Jer. 34:12-20).
- 18. After six years also reminds us of the shabbat: six days of working, then rest from the work.
  - a. This connection is seen in rabbinic writings.

**“God said: ‘As I created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so for six years shall he serve you, after which he goes forth a free man.’ ” - Exodus Rabbah 30:15**

- 19. Four times, Israel reminded that they were once slaves in Egypt but were redeemed.

**“Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” - Exodus 23:9**

- 20. God has given us a day of rest from our labors and redeemed those who were once slaves.
  - a. Thus, as a reminder, a person was obligated to release bondservant after six years.

## **CHAPTER 21: FOR THE LOVE OF THE MASTER**

- 1. The law gives the criteria for the released servant to go his own way.
  - a. If he came in with wife and children he leaves with him.
  - b. If not, he must leave them with the master – a difficult choice.
  - c. But if he plainly says, “I love my master, my wife and my children” (in that order).”

2. He decides not to go his “own way” but to stay because He loves his master and family.
  - a. Love the LORD your God ... and your neighbor as yourself.
  - b. Decides that he will not go his own way but will stay with His master forever!
  - c. The key is in the statement: “I love my master.”
  - d. Hidden within this statement, is an expression to love Adonai.
  - e. *Ahavti et adoni* אהבתי את אדוני - also text alludes to the Alef-Tav – the Word of God.
3. Israel had said, “we will hear and do” - God gave something to **do** to see if they could **hear**.
  - a. Israel had been set free from Egypt – the house of bondage – and could go their way.
  - b. They said they wanted to serve God, yet had been motivated to say that by fear.
  - c. Remember, God already knew what was in their heart.

**“Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”**

**- Deuteronomy 5:23**

4. Theirs’ was an emotional response but how long did this response last?
  - a. The bondservant is not motivated to serve forever by fear but by love.
  - b. God wants us to serve Him out of love with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.
  - c. This is the message of the bondservant.
  - d. To love his master and to serve him with all of your heart.

**“But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him to the judges [Heb. האלהים *ha’elohim*]. He shall also bring him to the door [הדלת *ha’delat*], or to the doorpost [המזוזה *ha’mezuzah*] and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and **he shall serve him forever.**” - Exodus 21:5-6**

5. If the people had a heart to obey, all would be well for them and their children forever.
  - a. God came down on Sinai so the people would believe Moses forever (Ex. 19).
  - b. Bondservant who does not go his own way comes into the master’s house forever.
  - c. Rabbis understood “forever” to mean until the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10).
  - d. Speaking prophetically, the Yovel is about being in the Master’s House forever.
  - e. It is to dwell in the New Jerusalem eternally liberated from the bondage of carnality.
6. In deciding not to go his own way, the servant has decided to go the master’s way forever.
  - a. He will not live life the way he would choose but the way the master’s says.
  - b. This is what the Master is seeking, from the beginning.
  - c. What does He want the motivation for His servants to be - fear or love?
7. Presume that Adam, first bondservant, would have been able to live in the Garden forever.
  - a. Had he simply continued to walk in obedience to God.
  - b. It would have been likewise for His children.
  - c. From the beginning, this has been the desire of our Father.
  - d. It has also been the desire who choose to follow Him because they love Him.

**“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” – Psalm 23:6**

8. After, of his own free will, the servant decides not to go his own way he:

- a. Goes to the judges (*ha'elohim*) and makes a public declaration.
  - b. *Elohim* also rendered "God" because judges carry out God's will.
  - c. This helps to ensure that all know it was the servant's wishes; not coerced.
9. Then taken to the door of his master's house where ear is bored open, nailed to house.
- a. Why was his ear chosen for this rite? Shema Yisrael!
  - b. By piercing his ear, he has had his ear opened that he may truly hear his master.
  - c. Remember, Israel had said, "We will **hear** and **do**."
  - d. He would not, then, go into his master's house and tell him he will not do this or that.
  - e. Whatever the master asks of him, he will do because he loves his master.
10. Having his ear pierced like this, he is literally and figuratively attached to his master's house.
- a. What prompted him to do this? Love for his master.
11. Yet to get into the master's house, he must go through the door.
- a. Interestingly, it was upon the door that the blood of the Pesach offering was placed.
  - b. This was what ensured their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
  - c. The blood of the lamb alludes to Y'shua who is the Lamb.
  - d. And who is also the DOOR (of the sheepfold) John 10:7.
  - e. The bondservant who loves his master must enter His house by the door – Y'shua!
12. That his ear is opened (pierced) alludes to a Psalm of David, which says:

**"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require." - Psalm 40: 6**

13. Sacrifice and offering . . . burnt offering and sin offering He did not require?
- a. Then what is the book of Leviticus about?
  - b. Remember what scribe said to Y'shua when He gave the two primary commandments.

**"So the scribe said to Him, 'Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' "** - Mark 12:32-33

14. Between these two statements in Psalm 40, is, **"my ears you have opened."**
- a. The Hebrew word is *karah* and means "to dig," "to bore open."
  - b. The Amplified version of this verse:

**"You have given me the capacity to hear and obey [Your law, a more valuable service than] burnt offerings and sin offerings [which] You do not require." - Psalm 40:6**

15. The NIV version says:

**"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced." – Psalm 40:6**

16. This is alluding to the piercing (opening) of the ear of the bondservant.
- a. Now notice: David writes this but could David declare:

**"Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.' "** – Psalm 40:7

17. Messiah is the only one who could declare that the entire book is written of me.
  - a. It is Messiah, actually, who says: **My ears you have opened.**
  - b. Messiah came as a bondservant seeking those willing to become a bondservant.
  - c. It is Y'shua who speaks and therefore it is Y'shua who says:

**“I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.” – Psalm 40:8**

18. We understand that the Father's will is that we should keep His commandments.
  - a. In fact, Messiah says “He delights” to do His will.
  - b. The person who follows Messiah in this way is like a well-watered tree (Ps. 1:1-3).
  - c. That person “delights in the Torah of the LORD.
19. Notice, Messiah, in Psalm 40, says, “Your law (torah) is within my heart.”
  - a. He does these things, then, not out of fear but because it is his delight – out of love.
  - b. As His followers, shouldn't we emulate this attitude?
  - c. Have the heart of a bondservant to serve out of love, not exclusively fear.
  - d. To delight to keep His torah because it is written upon our hearts (internalized).

**“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” - Jeremiah 31:33**

20. V7: “If a man sell his daughter as a bondwoman [Heb. אמה *amah*] – not עבד *eved*.
  - a. Not suggesting that a man is so insensitive to sell his daughter for gain.
  - b. Understood to mean he does this with the intent that she is to marry master or his son.
  - c. The word amah is a family word with אמם *amam* which means “be dependent.”
  - d. From this root we get אמ *em* or אמה *ima* – “mother.”
21. May also apply in those situations where she would be the second wife of master or son.
  - a. This position was not considered as “secondary” in sense of a degraded one.
  - b. Her offspring had equal rights in matters of inheritance.
  - c. This brings to mind what Laban did with Leah – in effect, sold her to Jacob.
  - d. Not in order but in matters of the heart, she became the secondary wife.
22. In either case, the Torah doesn't necessarily condone but protects the rights of these women.
  - a. If he decided not to marry her or to divorce her, he may not “sell” her to someone else.
  - b. He must allow for her to be redeemed by her family or he must keep her.
  - c. In any case, he is considered to have dealt deceitfully with her; didn't keep his word.
23. V9: If he espouses her to his son then he must treat her as a daughter.
  - a. She is to be provided and cared for and not treated as a slave or servant.
  - b. In our culture these situations are hard to fathom but the ordinance protects the woman.
  - c. Should he take yet another wife, this woman's rights are not to be diminished.
24. V11: If he fails to treat her favorably as laid out by these instructions, then this woman is free to leave without any type of compensation for the man.
25. In summary, both of these ordinances remind of the two greatest commands.
  - a. “Love the LORD your God with all your heart” and “love your neighbor as yourself.”

## CHAPTER 21: LAWS CONCERNING VIOLENCE

**“He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die. And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” – Exodus 21:12-15**

1. In short, murder incurs the death penalty but only in cases where it was premeditated.
  - a. If it was premeditated, it is unlawful to spare that person.
  - b. If one was killed through carelessness, person is not necessarily deserving of death.
  - c. However, the person will be tried and will be punished appropriately.
  - d. In meantime, is given a place of refuge from those who would avenge innocent blood.
  - e. These cities of refuge are discussed in Numbers 35 and Deuteronomy 19.
2. The phrase “God delivered him into his hand” suggests that some things are not happenstance.
  - a. Does this hint that some “victims” are being dealt justice from above?
  - b. Example: Bob Ford murdered Jesse James and was punished.
  - c. However, did Jesse James pay for his murders at hands of another murderer?
  - d. Consider the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart which brought about his demise.
  - e. Those events that we refer to as “acts of God” – nothing without His knowledge.
  - f. God is just even if we can’t comprehend it.
3. The person who murders with forethought is not to be spared regardless of station in life.
  - a. If that person were to take hold of the altar in court seeking safety, not to be spared.
  - b. Again, only when it was intentional; given asylum if it was accidental.
  - c. In Greece, asylum was given to every murderer.
  - d. In Middle Ages, the Church gave asylum to criminals of different sorts.
  - e. Today in America, asylum is given to illegal immigrants, some of them criminals.
4. Considering honoring one’s parents is among the Ten Commandments, anyone who would strike their parents out of anger is someone, according to Torah, deserving of death.
  - a. Would assume that this would not be the case if self-defense was necessary.
  - b. In fact, rabbinical law said death only incurred if the blow actually left a visible scar.
  - c. Death also administered to those who curse their parents (v.17).
  - d. Administered by court and not the parents; Roman father could kill son for no reason.

**“He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.” – Exodus 21:16**

5. This ordinance forbids kidnapping someone to use for ransom or to sell into slavery.
  - a. The story of Joseph comes to mind and is blatant violation of this command.
  - b. Does this have anything to do with why Israel became Pharaoh’s slaves?
  - c. It was equivalent to loss of liberty and spiritual death to be among foreigners as slave.
  - d. American slave trade was in violation of this precept as well.
  - e. Those who sold them into slavery and those who enslaved them paid heavy price.
6. Next several verses detail certain offenses and their consequences related to personal injury.
  - a. Overall theme of these ordinances is contained in verses 24-25.

**“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” – Exodus 21:24-25**

7. The idea of “life for life, eye for eye” is so much retaliation but measure for measure.
  - a. What measure one dispenses is the measure that shall be returned to them.
  - b. Not to say that if one blinded another then his eye was put out.
  - c. But the offender had to pay just compensation to the person that he injured.
  - d. Jewish history says corporal punishment consisted only of death penalty and lashes.
  - e. Y’shua alludes to this concept in Matthew.

**“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” – Matthew 7:1-2**

8. It seems that this concept can have a positive counterpart as well.

**“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” – 2 Corinthians 9:6-7**

9. In summary, when someone acts for good or bad from their heart, the measure by which they acted will be returned to them in like manner – measure for measure.
  - a. If we are unforgiving, we are not forgiven; if we forgive, we are forgiven (Lk. 6:37).
  - b. If we are merciful we will be given mercy and if not, we will not be shown mercy.
  - c. This is justice according to Scripture; it addresses the issue of the heart.
10. V26-27: If a bondservant or woman was struck by master and resulted in loss of any limb, eye or even tooth, that servant was immediately entitled to release.
  - a. Again demonstrating that God provided recourse for even the “least of these.”
  - b. Presumably masters were allowed to discipline but not mistreat.
11. The next few verses address situations where someone is hurt or killed by an animal.
  - a. More importantly, it addresses consequences for owners, especially if negligent.
  - b. The animal is to be stoned to death and its flesh not eaten – total loss for owner.
  - c. If owner knew animal was prone to attacking and kills someone, owner put to death.
  - d. Dramatic incentive to take care of one’s business – don’t be apathetic and lazy.
  - e. Must consider others and their welfare as you conduct your own business.
12. These ordinances speak to the sanctity of human life.
  - a. Also, again, speaks to the condition of one’s heart - uncaring or considerate of others.
13. V32: “If the ox bore a bondservant...he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver.”
  - a. Interesting because Y’shua was a bondservant and betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.
  - b. Those that wanted him crucified taunted Him upon the tree as prophesied in Psalm 22.

**“All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him! ... Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.”**

**– Psalm 22:7-8, 12**



14. In remaining verses of this chapter, other stipulations established to deal with situations where people might be inclined to be negligent.
- Digging a pit and not covering it for sake of others or their livestock.
  - If one's animal kills someone else's animal compensation must be made.

## CHAPTER 22: LAWS CONCERNING LOSS OF PROPERTY

**“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double.” – Exodus 22:1-4**

- The Torah is adamant about how one is to treat their fellow man and, in conjunction with this, how to treat their property – it is the fruit of their hard labor.
  - To steal it or to inflict damage upon it is equivalent to doing the same to the person.
- V1: If someone steals property from another, multiple restitutions must be made.
  - Five oxen for an ox, four sheep for a sheep.
  - Obviously to discourage theft of someone's property.
  - Code of Hammurabi was much more severe.
  - In Europe and in America death was meted out for stealing livestock into 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- V2: “If a thief is found breaking in [lit. digging or tunneling through]” – right to self defense.
  - Homes of old were often constructed of clay, thus “digging through.”
  - One may protect his life and family in this circumstance.
  - Because it must be assumed that the thief would be prepared to kill the owner.
  - There is no blood guiltiness on the owner because the thief forfeited his life by action.
- Interesting to consider that we are “houses of clay” and the thief tries often to “dig through.”
  - He probes until he finds the weakest spot in our lives that he may try to exploit.
  - In those situations, it is important to take note of those weak points and correct.
  - Seek help from the One who guards the doors to our “house.”
- V3: “If the sun is risen upon him (thief) there shall be blood guiltiness for him.”
  - Meaning that if he breaks in during the day he is not likely seeking to inflict harm.
  - Suggesting that one may kill in self-defense of life and family when felling threatened.
  - One should not kill another in defense of property exclusively.
  - In this case, the thief is made to pay restitution; if caught with it in hand, pays double.
  - If he has nothing to offer in recompense, he is sold into servitude to pay his debt.
- Most state laws in US favor rights of homeowner if someone is breaking in and is killed.
  - Is presumed that thief will commit violence against homeowner.
  - However, one is not authorized to use deadly force in defense of property.
  - Someone driving off in your car is not grounds to use deadly force; life not threatened.
  - This is same concept being conveyed in this verse.
- Next few verses deal with being careless with one's own or on one's own property.
  - Sending your cattle into another field or vineyard.
  - Starting a fire that wind catches and sends into someone else's property.
  - Safeguarding something entrusted to you by another.

- d. If guilty, that person is expected to compensate the person who is at loss.
  - e. These accusations must be confirmed by witnesses and a court must enforce.
  - f. Yet, one would hope that the responsible party would, of own volition, make it right.
8. If you possess something that belongs to someone else – you are responsible for it.
- a. Exception would be if the owner is there with you; presumably he is responsible.
9. Footnote: Doesn't apply to situations where there is a loss in normal performance of duty.
- a. Example: Using the employer's tool to perform a job and the tool malfunctions.

## CHAPTER 22: MORAL OFFENSES

**“If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.” – Exodus 22:16-17**

1. From property rights to moral rights and offenses; Torah always speaks to matters of the heart.
2. V16-17: Essentially deals with the issues of pre-marital sex and its consequences.
  - a. Assuming the girl was not betrothed to another, then there is to be a shotgun wedding.
  - b. The man must commit to marry the girl; however, the father has the final word.
  - c. He can refuse to allow his daughter to marry the man; offender pays a reasonable fine.
  - d. Fine called “dowry of virgins” is fifty shekels of silver (Deut. 22:29).
3. However, if the girl was betrothed to another, this is equivalent to adultery and both are guilty.
  - a. If in the city, both would be subject to the death penalty.
  - b. If in the countryside, only the man would be subject to the death penalty.

**“You shall not permit a sorceress to live.” – Exodus 22:18**

4. This is considered to be highly contagious and extremely dangerous to the nation.
  - a. It, like most of the Adversary's tactics is enticing and yet corrosive bringing death.
  - b. Not because it has real power to conjure or transform physical reality.
  - c. Because it undermines the sovereignty of Creator in minds of people.
  - d. Becomes another form of idolatry.
5. Hebrew word is *חַשְׁפָּה* *hashefa* – from a root that means “secure obedience through guile.”
  - a. It is to denote something using imagery intended to mislead and then control.
  - b. The Adversary is an illusionist; looking at one hand while working with the other.
  - c. Septuagint renders this as “poisoner” – poison usually contained in attractive container.
  - d. Bred from immodesty, immorality, paganism and crime.
  - e. Placed between commands against sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion.
6. The wording of this command considered to be unusual – would expect different phrasing.
  - a. “A sorceress you shall surely put to death.”
  - b. That it is not opens door to alternate interpretation – don't support sorceress.
  - c. If you don't support her by seeking her out, then she will not be able to continue.
  - d. Fact that Saul knew of witch of Endor meant that she had been around for some time.
7. Intriguing because this verse was basis for the torture and death of many accused of such.
  - a. Salem witch trials of 1690s resorted to torture to extort a confession.
  - b. Such methodology is not supported by the Torah.
  - c. No one is required to brand themselves a criminal in a court setting; 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

8. V19: “Whoever lies with a beast shall be put to death” – from sorcery to other perversions.
  - a. This activity was part of many heathen rites.
9. V20: Sacrificing to any god other than YHVH will be destroyed.
  - a. Includes his ministers and representatives including angels.
  - b. That is linked to why Y’shua is not merely a man; He is YHVH manifest in flesh.

**“You shall neither mistreat a stranger [Heb. גֵּר *ger*] nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” – Exodus 22:21-24**

10. Israel is to consider the plight of those who are strangers and sojourners because they were.
  - a. Abraham sojourned in the land of Canaan; Israel in the land of Egypt.
  - b. Israel should understand what it means to be in a strange land; Egyptians hated them.
  - c. The term “barbarian” is term coined by Greeks for all non-Greeks.
  - d. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” – sometimes neighbor is the Samaritan.
11. Talmud mentions that the command to “love your neighbor” or not to oppress him is mentioned thirty-six times in the Torah.
  - a. Reason given is because it is right to do so.
  - b. Those who have been downtrodden prove to be worse oppressors when given power.
  - c. Have to wonder if this is not what is going on in the world today.
12. Therefore, one should not be mistreated or favored just because he is a stranger.
  - a. He should be treated just like anyone else because he is a human being.
  - b. Israel was no better than this person before they were redeemed from Egypt.
  - c. However, the strangers among Israel were expected to keep the same law as Israel.
13. While the powerful tend to take advantage of the weak, sometimes the weak like to exploit their weakness for gain as well.
  - a. They take great insult at everything that might gain them some advantage.
  - b. i.e. Gay and minority rights have exploited willingness of many to make concessions.
14. Israel is to take care of those who can’t take care of themselves and should they mistreat:
  - a. He will return measure for measure; their wives will become widows etc.
  - b. Y’shua said: “Whoever mistreats one of these little ones...” (Mark 9:42).
  - c. Those without their human protectors are left vulnerable.
  - d. Therefore, the Creator Himself becomes their protector and provider.
15. In short, in Israel there are none who are considered to be second-class citizens.
  - a. Their station in life may vary – master or servant – but in God they are all equal.

**“For as many of you as were baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Y’shua. And if you are Messiah’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” – Galatians 3:27-29**

16. In a related theme, care is to be taken not to exploit the less fortunate among you.

**“If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. If you ever take your neighbor’s garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.” – Exodus 22:25-27**

17. God’s instructions to those who lend is intended to protect the self-respect of the borrower.
  - a. He is not to be considered inferior but in need.
  - b. This is one of the most meritorious deeds that someone can perform.
  - c. To help those in need without making a profit from it.
17. Israel should lend to brothers in need without acting as a creditor; seizing land if no payment.
  - a. Attitude should be lend to him and don’t press him to pay back or put to shame.
  - b. Interest (gain) is not to be charged to your brother who is in need.
  - c. This doesn’t apply to those cases when money is lent for commercial purposes.
18. It is unlawful to take, as collateral, something indispensable to the borrower (Deut 24:6).
  - a. A tool they use to make a living or what they would use to prepare meals.
  - b. If you do take a “pledge” or collateral, your rights to hold onto it are limited.
  - c. It should not complicate their misfortune – their only coat against the cold.
  - d. Ideally, this gives the misfortunate opportunity to regain their footing.
19. If a lender does mistreat the borrower and cries out, God will hear and will respond.
  - a. In Rome, a lender was allowed to put borrower on public display in chains.
  - b. If no one came forward to pay debt, he could be sold into slavery or put to death.
  - c. If there was more than one creditor, he could be cut in pieces.
- 20: V28: “You shall not revile God [Heb. אלהים *elohim*] (“judges”) or curse your leaders.”
  - a. Varying ways in which to interpret this verse where *elohim* is concerned.
  - b. Some interpret as one is not to blaspheme the Creator; others regard it as judges.
  - c. The authorities that are set over us are to be treated and spoken of with respect.

**“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” – Romans 13:1-2**

21. What about when authorities are evil? There is no qualifier in the Torah or in Paul’s letter.
  - a. Therefore we must resolve that, though we disagree, we are still to hold our tongue.
  - b. In the end, our leaders for good or evil are placed there by decree of the Almighty.
  - c. Either because the people are righteous or because they have become wicked.
  - d. Was John disobedient when he confronted Philip?

**“Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. Because John had said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” – Matthew 14:3-4**

22. Obviously John confronted Philip but not necessarily in a disrespectful manner.
  - a. Therefore it seems it is expected that we speak truth to leaders but in respectful tone.
  - b. Should treat them or speak to them with contempt even if we find them contemptible.

- c. We are to be careful about speaking in seditious tones to instigate rebellion.
  - d. We may find that we are fighting against God.
  - e. There were zealots among Y'shua's followers who did not understand His purpose.
23. Another interpretation of this instruction is that Israel is not to blaspheme those other "gods" that are esteemed by others.
- a. In other words, do not speak disparagingly of other people's views and faiths.
  - b. This is according to Josephus and Philo; open to debate.
  - c. However it would seem that Paul did not do speak critically of the gods of Athens.
  - d. He used their belief in "the unknown God" to make known to them the One God.
24. If correct, this should not be interpreted to mean that we are to speak of these gods or to condone worship of these gods but to demonstrate our focus is to lift up and sanctify the One and Only God.
- a. Using degrading and disparaging language about someone's belief creates distance.
  - b. Makes it more difficult to reach them with the truth of the God of Israel.
25. The remaining verses of this chapter are a few instructions pertaining to:
- Offering of firstfruits whether harvest, livestock or first-born sons.
  - First-born of flock are to be given on 8<sup>th</sup> day.
  - Sons were to be circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> signifying entrance into the covenant.
26. The Creator reminds us what this is all about – being holy and set apart.

**“And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.” – Exodus 22:31**

27. Nothing that is unclean or killed in an un-kosher manner is to be eaten by his people.
- a. Those things are for the dogs.
  - b. Interestingly, in Egypt, dogs did not move their tongue against Israel – man or beast.
  - c. Even though the Egyptians considered Israel to be unclean.

## **CHAPTER 23: TRUTH IN JUSTICE**

**“You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness [Heb. חָמֵן יָד *ed chamas*]. You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.” – Exodus 23:1-3**

1. Summarized, these verses are about integrity; guarding one's tongue against evil speaking.
  - a. Includes falsehoods, rumors and, in some cases, something true intended to do harm.
  - b. Recently someone shared something with me that is relevant to this topic.
  - c. Illustration of the feather pillow being torn and attempt to repair.
2. Slander injures three say the Rabbis: the one slandered, the one who slanders and the one who passes it on from there.
  - a. “unrighteous witness” is literally “witness of violence.”
  - b. Honest person should not associate his testimony with that of a dishonest person.
  - c. Based on verses, Talmud says litigant can't state his case unless other litigant present.
3. Not to follow the crowd down the wrong path regardless of the circumstances.
  - a. Should not follow the masses for evil purposes, particularly if it perverts justice.

- b. This is a problem facing our own country; following the crowd because it seems good.
- c. Which results in calling evil good and good evil; e.g. Roe v. Wade.
- d. The flow of traffic is away from the Creator and what He says is just.

**“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6:8**

- 4. To do justly is to show no partiality in any dispute – to the powerful or to the poor.
  - a. True justice is blind to someone’s station in life.
  - b. Forbidden to pervert justice no matter how good the intention.
  - c. Social justice, by today’s definition, is not justice but perverting justice.
- 5. Favoring the poor in a dispute because they are poor is not just.
  - a. Antagonism toward wealthy and the so-called 99% is exactly what this verse prohibits.
  - b. The balancing feature in the Torah is not to take advantage of the poor among you.
- 6. V4-5: Instructed to do right thing even when it involves your enemy and one who hates you.
  - a. Cannot allow your grievance with him to influence you when your duty to him is clear.
  - b. If his ox is lost and you find it, return to him regardless of his feeling toward you.
  - c. Therefore, his evil doesn’t justify evil on your part toward him.
  - d. Y’shua addressed this:

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 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, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” – Matthew 5:43-48**

- 7. In summary, his actions towards you should not set the standard for your actions toward him.
  - a. Therefore, hostility toward those of another faith is not justified even if it is false faith.
  - b. Unfortunately, many atrocities have been committed in the name of Christianity.
  - c. However, the issue is not a Christian one but a human one.
  - d. Instead we should behave as Solomon admonished:

**“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head and the LORD will reward you.”  
– Proverbs 25:21-22**

- 8. The second of the two primary commands – “love your neighbor as yourself.”
  - a. Who is my neighbor? It might be the one you consider to be an outcast (Samaritan).

**“You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.” – Exodus 23:6-8**

9. Another admonishment to not play favorites either for powerful or for the poor.
  - a. Furthermore, take every precaution not to condemn the innocent.
  - b. Particularly when it comes to matters of life and death.
  - c. Also reminded that the guilty will not escape justice; at least not God's justice.
10. False matter is the only transgression where God says "keep far from it."
  - a. It demonstrates God's nature and character and accentuates that of the Adversary.
11. Bribes are ways to pervert justice for the cause of those who have the means to bribe.
  - a. This indicts both the briber and the one taking it – the judge or official.
  - b. Bribes don't necessarily have to be the overt kind.
  - c. Those who legally contribute to political campaign or ministry can influence.
12. V9: Yet another reminder not to oppress the stranger; remember experience in Egypt.
  - a. Even tells them to sympathize with strangers knowing how it felt; yet, you were freed.

**“Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, but the seventh year you shall let it rest [Heb. root שמת *shamat*] 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. 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 [Heb. שיננש *vayinefesh*].” – Exodus 23:10-12**

13. In these verses we have instructions in regard to the Sabbaths of the land and of the week.
  - a. These are laws in general; details are given later in Torah; Lev. 25 & Deut. 15.
  - b. Included here because it reinforces concept of helping the poor and helpless.
  - c. Notice that the land, produce and work is “your” but in speaking of Yovel it is “its.”
  - d. Inferring that the land and produce during Yovel isn't “yours.”
  - e. In that year it belongs to the “poor of your people” along with beasts and strangers.
14. The weekly Sabbath and the Sh'mitah (sabbatical year) is interruption of man's activity.
  - a. Just as man is to rest weekly, the land is “released” from its labor every seven years.
  - b. After the Sabbath and Sh'mitah he returns to his property and vocation.
  - c. He and his servants will be refreshed – word related to נפש *nefesh* or “soul.”
  - d. Akin to “catching your breath.”
15. Prophetically Yovel hints at end of days when Creation reverts back to its owner.
  - a. In that time, all things held in bondage will be released.

**“Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” – Romans 8:21-22**

16. V13: “In all things mentioned, take heed” – listen carefully and do these things.
  - a. “Make no mention of the name of other gods; let it not be heard from your mouth.”
  - b. Hebrew phrase for “name of other gods: ושמ אלהים אחרים *v'shem elohim acharim*.
  - c. They are not called בעלים *ba'alim* here; they are called אלהים *elohim*.
  - d. On other hand, God is called בעל *Ba'al* on occasion.

**“For your Maker is your husband [Heb. בעל *ba'al*], the LORD of hosts is His name.”  
– Isaiah 54:5**

17. The point: is this instruction to never mention other gods by name; e.g. Ba'al?
  - a. Elijah mentioned *Ba'al* by name with his mouth on several occasions (1 Kings 18).
  - b. The word ba'al means "control" and is also the word for "husband."
  - c. Suggesting strongly that context is very important; would also apply to "God, Lord."
  - d. Also important to consider the word  $\text{שֵׁם}$  *shem* or "name" – "authority."

**"I have come in My Father's name (authority), and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name (authority), him you will receive." – John 5:43**

18. So, in our passage the "other gods" are called *elohim*, a title typically used for God.
  - a. As our husband, God is sometimes referred to ba'al, typically understood to be an idol.
  - b. How do we reconcile? By understanding the significance of "name" as "authority."
  - c. Don't speak on behalf of other gods or speak/act as if they have authority.
  - d. Thus the admonishment to "heed all things I have said" – heed my authority.

## **CHAPTER 23: PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS**

**"Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 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 Aviv, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the first fruits 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. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD." – Exodus 23:14-17**

1. These verses summarize the three pilgrimage festivals that every male was to attend.
  - a. More details are given in Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16.
  - b. They epitomize the concepts of seasons, freedom and prosperity.
  - c. Perhaps provided influence for the statement, "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness."
  - d. We would assume their wives would accompany them; Hannah with Elkanah (1Sam.)
2. The three festivals here are:
  - Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag HaMatzot) – closely related to Passover.
  - Feast of Weeks, Harvest, Firstfruits, Pentecost (Shavuot).
  - Feast of Tabernacles, Ingathering (Sukkot).
3. Every man was to bring a gift "as he is able according to the blessing given" (Deut. 16:17).
  - a. In this way he would not appear before the LORD empty-handed.
4. Feast of Unleavened Bread is to commemorate the departure from Egypt.
  - a. They ate their bread in haste because they didn't have to allow the dough to rise.
5. Feast of Harvest (Shavuot) commemorates the giving of the Torah at Sinai.
  - a. Traditionally called *z'man matan torahtenu* – "time of giving to us of the Torah."
6. Sukkot or the Feast of Ingathering is, as mentioned, celebrated at the end of the year.
  - a. That is to say, the end of the growing season or agricultural year.
7. V18: "You shall not offer my sacrifice with leavened bread" – in conjunction with Pesach.
  - a. Could not offer the Pesach sacrifice until afternoon of 14 Aviv when leaven removed.
9. V19: "You shall not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" – repeated in Ex. 34:26, Deut. 14:21.



- a. From this is derived the ruling that meat and dairy are not to be eaten together.
- b. Targum of Onkelos renders “you shall not eat flesh and milk.”
- c. Ibn Ezra: “The reason for this prohibition is concealed from the eyes of even the wise.”
- d. Gen. 18:8 – Abraham presented his angelic guests with meat, dairy and bread.
- e. Explanation is that first he gave them dairy and then, later, the meat.

**“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. 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.” – Exodus 23:20-22**

- 10. Later in Exodus 33, after the Golden Calf, God told Moses that He would withdraw His Presence from the camp and send an angel before the people.
  - a. To this, Moses protested, pleading that God Himself would go with them.
  - b. Here there is no resistance because there is nothing to hint God will not be with them.
  - c. Nachmanides suggests that this was prophetic, fulfilled in Joshua’s day.
  - d. Since Moses insisted God go with them, the angel came later.
  - e. Ramban believes this to be the same angel who appeared to Joshua later (Jos. 5:13-15).
  - f. This, I believe, is referring to the Messiah – the Word.
- 11. Other commentators speculate that this angel was not the one referred to after Golden Calf.
  - a. This was the highest of all angels, the one through whom God protected patriarchs.
  - b. The so-called “Angel of the LORD” also referred to in Judaism as Memra.
  - c. Either way, I believe it refers to the Messiah.
- 12. Footnote: since angel means “messenger” there are those who believe this to be human.
  - a. Namely, they believe this refers to Moses; because God spoke to him “face to face.”
- 13. They were to heed His voice and obey Him; reinforcing the idea this is the Messiah.
  - a. God said “because my name (שם *shem*) – authority - is in Him.”
  - b. That is why they were to listen and obey Him; God had vested His authority in Him.
  - c. Some believe this is the basis for Y’shua being Yahshua or Yahusha, etc.
  - d. Again, it is more about God’s authority being given to Him.
- 14. Obedience results in God being an enemy to our enemies; He will fight our battles for us.
  - a. The angel of the LORD who spoke to Joshua was captain of the LORD’s Hosts.
- 15. V23: It is this angel who will bring the people into the land of Canaan.
  - a. Again validating the view that this angel was the captain of the LORD’s Host.
  - b. Also validating that this angel was the Word of God.
- 16. V24: Upon entering the land they were to break down their gods; not bow down to the gods.
  - a. Instead they were to bow down and worship the LORD.
  - b. He would bless them provision and health so “the number of your days are fulfilled.”
  - c. The longer wise and obedient people live, the better society will become.
  - d. The opposite would result in the other extreme.
- 17. V27: “I will send my terror before you and discomfit your enemies” – who will then run.
  - a. The people would be panic-stricken; they already were at hearing of the Red Sea.
  - b. Rahav confirmed this to the two spies; Joshua 2:8-11.
  - c. V28: “I will send the hornet before you” – literal or referring to Egyptian invasion.
  - d. Also mentioned in Deut. 7:20 & Joshua 24:12.

- e. What could hornets accomplish: to harass and weaken those in fortified cities.

**“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. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.” – Exodus 23:29-30**

18. The conquest would slow and gradual, not being completed until the days of David.
  - a. There would be too few to fill the land; vacant areas would be overrun with beasts.
19. V31: Established their border from the Red Sea to Mediterranean to the Euphrates.
  - a. Therefore, inhabitants already there were to be driven out.
  - b. Consequently, they were to make no covenant with them, allowing for co-existence.
  - c. To do so, allowed them to keep their idols, raising chances Israel would bow to them.
  - d. God knew that if idols remained, eventually Israel would succumb to the enticement.

## **CHAPTER 24: MOSES ASCENDS THE MOUNTAIN**

1. From all the different ordinances discussed, the portion now shifts the scene back to Sinai.
  - a. Moses would ascend and be atop Mount Sinai for 40 days to be taught the Torah.

**“Now He said to Moses, ‘Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him.’” – Exodus 24:1-2**

2. Moses had already ascended before to receive the commandments (Ex. 20:21).
  - a. “Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.”
  - b. After placing these laws before the people he was summoned again here.
  - c. Moses was called up further than the others and went up into the cloud for 40 days.
3. These others went to the mountain but did not approach the summit where God was.
  - a. Before doing this, however, Moses presented the words of God to the people.
  - b. Their reply: “All the words the LORD has spoken we will do.”
  - c. Which, it would seem, may have been another emotional response.

**“And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.” – Exodus 24:4-5**

4. These events are before he actually ascended the mountain in answer to LORD’s call in v) 1.
  - a. The twelve pillars (tribes) were to symbolize that all tribes accepted the covenant.
  - b. The “young men” referred to are the firstborn of Israel who served as priests.
  - c. The altar was for the sacrifices that would be offered to ratify the covenant.
5. V6: “Half the blood in basins, half the blood he dashed against the altar” – sanctify it.
  - a. Covenants have always been ratified by blood.
6. V7: “He took the book of the covenant and read it within the hearing of the people.”
  - a. Book of the covenant believed to be Ten Commands and Ex. 20:19-23:33.
  - b. Read to the people so they would know what they were agreeing to.

- c. Every individual heard it read.
- d. They said, “All the LORD has spoken, we will do and obey.”

**“And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.’ ” – Exodus 24:8**

- 7. With this, they officially entered into the covenant with God, agreeing to keep His commands.
  - a. This was emblematic of consummation of the relationship.
  - b. They were to be impregnated by His Word and agree to cling to Him alone.
- 8. V9: Moses, Aaron, Nadav and Avihu plus the seventy elders ascended the mountain.
  - a. V10: “And they saw the God of Israel” – what must they have been experiencing?
  - b. “Under His feet was the like of paved work of sapphire, like heaven for clearness.”
  - c. Lending to belief that the two tablets were actually sapphire.
  - d. Fiery finger of God meeting the rock of the mountain transformed into sapphire.
- 9. Sapphire is mentioned in relation to God’s Throne in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezekiel 1:26).
  - a. Onkelos renders Ex. 24:8 as:

“They beheld the Majesty of the God of Israel and beneath His majestic throne was work of precious stones.”

- 10. Also hints at the fact His people – those He has “touched” – are His peculiar treasure.
  - a. Hebrew סגולה *s’gulah* is “treasure” or “jewels.”
  - b. When He touches the common it becomes unique and precious.
- 11. V11: “Upon the nobles of Israel He laid not His hand; they beheld God and ate and drank.”
  - a. Did them no harm because they had been sanctified and were answering His summons.
  - b. They ate the flesh of the peace offerings as a sacrificial meal, part of the ratification.
- 12. V12-13: Moses is summoned to come up to God and receive the tablets of the law.
  - a. These were written by God Himself.
  - b. Moses was to receive them and then teach them to the people.
- 13. V14: “To the elders he said, ‘Tarry here for us, until we come back unto you.’”
  - a. This statement reminds me of Y’shua’s words as He prepared to ascend to the Father.

**“He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ ” – Acts 1:4-5**

- 14. Moses delegates matters of judgment to Aaron and Hur in his absence.
  - a. Moses ascends the mountain out of the sight of the others.
  - b. Apparently, spent six days preparing to meet God, much like priest on Yom Kippur.
  - c. From the vantage point of the people, God was a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

**“Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” – Exodus 24:16-18**