### Exodus

## Chapter 23

1‘You should not accept false testimony, nor should you allow anyone who’s crooked to provide false testimony.  
  
  
 2‘You must not join a mob to do bad things, nor should you go along with with the majority when they’re wrong.  
  
  
 3‘If a man is found guilty, you must not [free him from his responsibilities] just because he’s poor, 4nor should you [find any man guilty] because he’s poor.  
  
  
 5‘If you find your enemy’s ox or burro wandering loose, you must catch it and return it to him.  
  
 6‘And if you see your enemy’s burro collapsed under its load, you shouldn’t just pass it by. You must help him to get it back on its feet.  
  
  
 7‘Never do anything that’s unfair...  
  
 ‘You shouldn’t kill the innocent along with the guilty, or accept a bribe to find a guilty person innocent.  
  
 8‘Nor should you accept gifts [when judging], because gifts blind the eyes of those who can see and twist the words of justice.  
  
 9‘You should never mistreat a stranger, because you know how they feel – since you were once strangers in the land of Egypt!  
  
  
 10‘You can plant your field and harvest it for 6 years...  
  
 11‘However, every 7 years you must leave it alone and allow it to rest, so that the poor of your nation can [find] food there, and the wild animals can eat whatever is left.  
  
 ‘That’s also what you must do to your vineyards and your olive groves.  
  
  
 12‘You should work for 6 days, but the 7th day is a day of rest, so that your burro, your ox, the sons of your female slaves, and strangers may be refreshed.  
  
  
 13‘Guard all the things that I’ve commanded you – and don’t mention the names of other gods or speak of them in any way!  
  
  
 14‘You must hold a feast to Me three times each year:  
  
 15[Feast #1]  
  
 ‘Be sure to observe the Feast of Fermentation-Free Bread. You must eat fermentation-free bread for 7 days (as I told you before) during the time of the month of new grain, because that’s when you came out of Egypt… And don’t approach Me empty-handed!  
  
 16[Feast #2]  
  
 ‘You must observe a feast when you harvest the first-fruits of your work, no matter what you’ve planted in your field.  
  
 [Feast #3]  
  
 ‘And [you must observe] a feast at the end of the year when you harvest the crops in your field.  
  
 17‘So, all your males must appear before Jehovah your God three times each year.  
  
  
 18‘And when I drive the other nations out of your midst and widen your borders, you must never offer fermented bread along with the blood sacrifices, nor should the fat of My feast be allowed to stay [on the altar] until the next morning.  
  
  
 19‘You must bring all the first fruitage of your fields to the House of your God, Jehovah.  
  
  
 ‘You must never boil a lamb in its mother’s milk.  
  
  
[Editor note: The story continues here, with God speaking.]  
   
  
20‘{Look!} I’m going to send My messenger to you in order to keep you headed in the right direction; for he will lead you into the land that I have prepared for you.  
  
 21Be sure to listen to him… Obey him! He won’t give in to you, because he carries My Name.  
  
  
 22‘Tell the children of IsraEl that if they’ll listen to what I say and do everything that I tell them, I’ll be an enemy to their enemies, and I’ll oppose anyone who’s against them.  
  
 23‘Then I’ll send My messenger to serve as their leader, and [he will] bring them to [the land of] the Amorites, Chettites, Pherezites, CanaAnites, Gergeshites, Evites, and Jebusites, whom I’ll destroy.  
  
 24‘However, [IsraEl] must not worship or serve the gods [of those people], nor should they do any of the things that they’re doing. Rather, [those people] must all be destroyed and their [sacred] columns must be pulled down!  
  
  
 25‘If you serve Jehovah your God, I’ll bless your bread, your wine, and your water, and I’ll keep you from getting sick... 26There won’t be anyone in your land who’s impotent or infertile, and you’ll live full lives.  
  
 27‘I’ll send terror ahead of you, all the nations in the land you’re entering will be amazed by you, and I’ll make all your enemies run from you! 28I’ll send hornets ahead of you to drive the Amorites, Evites, CanaAnites, and the Chettites away from you.  
  
 29‘I won’t throw them out in the 1st year, so the fields don’t grow wild and allow wild animals to multiply there. 30But before long, I’ll start throwing them out ahead of you, until you grow and inherit the land. 31Then I’ll set your borders from the Red Sea to the [MediTerranean], and from the desert to the great EuPhrates River.  
  
 ‘Since I’ll be handing over those who are living in the land and driving them away from you, 32you must make no treaties with them or with their gods... 33For they won’t be allowed to live in your land, lest they cause you to sin against Me.  
  
 ‘Because, if you serve their gods, that will lead to your downfall.’