

A note from Kathy

Once while on a family vacation near Dubois, Wyoming, we hiked up a mountain to find Jade Lake. The climb was long and difficult, and even a bit dangerous at times, but we saw amazing things the whole way there. When we finally arrived several hours later at the clearing, it was worth every step. The lake was even more beautiful than described. It was the kind of thing you must experience for yourself. Much like Exodus 23, there are amazing treasures to be found if you will take the journey.

Observation

1. Verses 1-9 contain a series of eleven “do not” commands. Make a list in your own words (be sure to catch even if specifically worded “do not”).
2. Micah 6:8 would once again be a good scripture to recall if we find ourselves in any of the situations mentioned in Exodus 23:1-9. I hope you have it committed to memory.
3. When you wrote the list above, did you find any commands on the list that might prove harder to obey than others? Which ones?
4. Exodus 23:10-13 has to do with the Sabbath laws. They were to allow the fields a Sabbath year. How many years were they to sow their crops in a field? How long was it to be left unplowed and unused?
5. During this Sabbatical time, who was free to eat of the spontaneous crops?
6. Even the animals and slaves were to be given a Sabbath day. Why did God institute the Sabbath? Exodus 23:12
7. In verses 14-19, the Lord established three festivals to be celebrated by all the Israelites. What were the names of the three festivals?

8. What did each of these three festivals represent? Try to come up with one or two words so that you can recall their meaning easily.
9. When were they to celebrate the festival of unleavened bread?
10. When were they to celebrate the festival of harvest with firstfruits?
11. When were they to celebrate the festival of ingathering?
12. Verse 16 commands them not to offer any animal sacrifice to God as atonement for sin along with any yeast (or leaven). Look up “leaven” in a good Bible dictionary, such as Easton’s Bible Dictionary or Smith’s Bible Dictionary. What is it about leaven that God would not want offered in a sacrifice to him?
13. Where would a Hebrew woman get the leaven for her next loaf of bread?
14. How does leaven operate when added to the dough?
15. What is God promising them by sending his angel to guard them? Verses 20-23
16. In verses 22-31, God tells them, “If you will listen carefully to what the angel says and do all I tell you...,” then we see a series of “I will’s”; list them. After you write this list, briefly state out beside each one what it is that God is promising to do for them.
17. Finally in verses 32-33, God gave them two more commands concerning the people living in the land when they arrived. What are the two commands? Why do you believe God gave them these two commands? What was God protecting them from?

Application

1. Exodus 23:4-5 relate to lost property; not our property, nor property placed in our care. It is the property of an enemy, and yet scripture clearly instructs us to help him with it.

Can you think of a situation where this might happen to you? How do you believe God would have you respond?

2. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus taught, “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,...if you love those who love you, what reward will you get?” We are to go beyond simply doing good to those who do us good; we are to extend love and mercy with every opportunity to everyone. What will that look like in your life this week?
3. In verse 13, the Lord reminds the Israelites not to speak the names of any of the gods worshipped by the Egyptians while they lived there. What false gods reigned in your life prior to salvation? What must be done with them?
4. How does having an understanding of the three festivals mentioned in Exodus 23 help us live a life pleasing to God? How do the principles behind these special days direct us to be the holy people God desires? If you have a hard time answering this question, answer the next three and then come back to this one.
5. Has God delivered you from bondage?
6. Has God blessed you in such a way that you see his promise and hope for future blessing?
7. Do you have a thankful heart for all God’s blessings toward you?
8. In verse 19, what were the people instructed to bring to the Lord? How careful are we to bring our first and best to God? We should be purposeful as we take our offering to the Lord. He is worthy of our best, not simply what we feel we can do without.

9. What provision has God given us, his children?

John 14:26 But the Comforter, [who is] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.

Galatians 5:16, 22-25 (The wonderful thing about fruit is the proof it brings.)

16 This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's

have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

10. Have we been given promises like those we saw in Exodus 23?

11. Do we face our enemies alone?

12. We have much to rejoice over. What has God promised you?

If you have committed your life to him and asked him to forgive your sins and be the Lord of your life, you became a child of the King and all the benefits that come along with that. One of the greatest benefits is the joy that we receive in Christ.

John 15:9-17 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other."

13. Why not write a prayer expressing your thanksgiving to God for all you have seen in this chapter concerning him?

Why not use the acronym ACT.

Acknowledge God's character,

Confess my sins,

Thank him for all his loving provision.