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Exodus: Delivered By God, For God / Sabbath; Sacrifice; Worship; Gospel; Cross / Exodus 23:10–19

Rest, Realignment and Surrender

The Law of God given by Moses on Sinai serves multiple purposes. It demonstrates our inability to keep the law and therefore our need for a savior. It teaches us that we are to live holy lives before the Holy God. Along with these, the Law also reminds us that we are to be resting, worshipping and surrendering to God alone, for He alone is worthy.

Introduction

In Romans 12:1 Paul writes, “Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Specifically commanding us to present our bodies to him as living sacrifices. The Greek word that is translated here as “to present” was “often used as a technical term for a priest’s placing an offering on the altar. It therefore carried the general idea of surrendering or yielding up.” (MNTC Ro; MacArthur, John) Paul was instructing us as believer’s, whose soul is already the Lord’s by the grace of Christ, to give themselves wholly and completely to God. To be willing to commit all that we are to Him, trusting Him with all of our lives.

We see an example of this complete surrender in Abraham as he obeyed the commands of God and took Issac to sacrifice him. Hebrews 11:19 “He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he also received him back.” teaching us that Abraham knew God would keep the promise that He had made. John MacArthur makes this comment about our living sacrifice:

Romans: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary *The Body Must Be Given to God*

The living sacrifice we are to offer to the Lord who died for us is the willingness to surrender to Him all our hopes, plans, and everything that is precious to us, all that is humanly important to us, all that we find fulfilling.

This living sacrifice is also to be a holy sacrifice, one set apart for God. We

discussed this truth coming from the last part of Chapter 22 of Exodus a couple of weeks ago. When we present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, Paul says that this is our “spiritual service of worship”. The word translated as spiritual is also translated as reasonable. The concept being that as a result of what God has done for us, Romans 11:33 “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” and Romans 11:36 “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” and the mercies that we have received, our ONLY reasonable and spiritual response is to present all that we are and all that we have to God! This response is our service of worship. The Greek here is simply the word “latreia” which means service, the context we find this word in shows us that the particular service in mind is the worship of the Living God. MacArthur is helpful here as well when he states:

Romans: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary **The Body Must Be Given to God**

The only spiritual service of worship that honors and pleases God is the sincere, loving, thoughtful, and heartfelt devotion and praise of His children.

In our text today we are dealing with two sets of rules regarding the worship of God. These two sets of rules are centered around a verse that commands that this worship is to be for God and God alone. Please stand as we read God’s Holy, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word:

Exodus 23:10–19 LSB

“Now you shall sow your land for six years and gather in its produce,

but *on* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. Thus you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

“Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your maidservant, as well as your sojourner, may refresh themselves.

“Now concerning everything which I have said to you, beware; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let *them* be heard from your mouth.

"Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.

"You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

"Also *you shall keep* the Feast of the Harvest *of* the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.

"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh.

"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.

"You shall bring the choice first fruits of your ground into the house of Yahweh your God.

"**You** shall not boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.

Heavenly father, as we pause before your throne of mercy and grace we lift this time to you. Lord we ask that your Spirit would illuminate your truth to us. May you receive all of the praise, honor and glory here today. Father we ask all of these things in the name of your precious son, Jesus Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria

The five solas of the reformation are a great summation of much larger theological truths, truths that ultimately point to the reality that all that we do is for the Glory of God Alone. In Colossians 3:17 Paul tells us "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Here in Exodus 23 Moses writes it a little differently. In the middle of our text this morning there is one verse that solidifies the purpose of the two sets of commands that we see here. In Exodus 23:13 ""Now concerning everything which I have said to you, beware; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth." As you will quickly note, this is a repetition of

the first commandment to have no other gods before Yahweh. Two other things of note, first, the word translated here in the past tense (I have said) can actually be translated in the perfect tense (I am saying). Secondly, this verse contains an addition to the command, namely, that they are not to even have the name of other gods in their mouth, which is a way of saying that they are prohibited from all exercises of religion associated with that god. In the cultures surrounding the Israelites it was common place, since they were polytheistic, for them to have gods for every action or event and for them to speak the names of those gods as a form of blessing during the undertaking of those actions or events.

In his commentary on verse 13 Matthew Henry makes the following statement

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume Exodus 23:10–19

since idolatry was a sin which they were much addicted to, and would be greatly tempted to, they must endeavour to blot out the remembrance of the gods of the heathen, and must disuse and forget all their superstitious forms of speech, and never mention them but with detestation.

Note the statement at the beginning of the verse, they were commanded to take great care in everything that God had commanded them to do and ensure that this would be the manner of their behavior.

In our lives today, this still holds true, everything that we do, every action that we undertake, every event that we are involved in, all of our goings out and comings in are to be done for the glory of our Sovereign Lord, alone. In Deuteronomy 6 the Israelites are given what is known, even to this day as the "*shema*", a Hebrew word that simply means to hear. It can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - which instructs to accept God's absolute sovereignty and His love:

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 LSB

"Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one!

"You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as phylacteries between your eyes.

"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

then in Deuteronomy 11:13-21 - which instructs to accept the commandments and the reward/punishment concept (or the providence and provision of God):

Deuteronomy 11:13–21 LSB

"And it will be that, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love Yahweh your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul,

that I, *Yahweh*, will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rains, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.

"And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

"Beware lest your hearts be deceived, and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them,

and the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which Yahweh is giving you.

"You shall therefore place these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as phylacteries between your eyes.

"And you shall teach them to your sons, speaking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and

when you rise up.

"And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens *remain* above the earth.

and finally Numbers 15:37-41 - which serves as a constant reminder of obligation to God

Numbers 15:37-41 LSB

Yahweh also spoke to Moses, saying,

"Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.

"And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot,

so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God.

"I am Yahweh your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am Yahweh your God."

This is a part of the morning and evening prayers of devout Jews even today, but the important point for us, as believers, is the purpose behind this call to hear, and we find that purpose in Deuteronomy 6:2 ""....so that you and your son and your grandson ***might fear Yahweh your God.***" We have lost the "fear" of God today. We have lost it in our homes, in our work places, in our community, in our relationships with others and in our churches, more specifically, in our worship.

This is true of both our private worship, those actions we take that gives God glory in our everyday families and lives, and our corporate worship,

where we have replaced our submission before God in humbly coming to Him and trusting in Him for our provisions, our praise to God and the glorifying of His name for His continually presence among us with a vapid pursuit of a a fresh encounter, filling or experience, and our pursuit of Him through His word, seeking to know and understand Him more fully, to hunger and thirst for His word. We no longer have the approach of the Psalmist who in Psalm 42:1 is "As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God."

Over and over in God's word He instructed the Israelites very specifically in their worship ensuring that there was no question left about how they should come before Him. The first and most important of those truths where that they were to come to Him alone. In the decalogue God followed up the first command with the second and third, Exodus 20:4-6

Exodus 20:4–6 LSB

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

All of which specifically deal with keeping God as the central point and sole focus of ALL WORSHIP. As a reminder to the Israelites, God is going to give them here some additional instructions regarding their private worship and their corporate worship.

Spiritual Rejuvenation

We began our text this morning with Exodus 23:10-12

Exodus 23:10–12 LSB

"Now you shall sow your land for six years and gather in its produce,

but *on* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may

eat. Thus you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

“Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your maidservant, as well as your sojourner, may refresh themselves.

which are obviously laws regarding the sabbath. As you may recall the in fifth command God directed the Israelites to, Exodus 20:8 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”, and what we find here is both a reminder of the original law (dating back to the creation and recorded in the 10 commandments) and an exposition of that law by giving further details and expectations, specifically the sabbath year. Fully expounded in Leviticus 25 the sabbath year was a command that God expected the people to obey that actually looked forward to when they would have taken possession of the promised land and it would serve as a reminder to them of the provision of God. Leviticus 25:19-22 explained:

Leviticus 25:19–22 LSB

‘Then the land will yield its fruit, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it.

‘But if you say, “What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our produce?”

then I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the produce for three years.

‘So you shall sow the eighth year and eat old things from that produce, eating *the old* until the ninth year when its produce comes in.

These verses also contained a reminder of the weekly sabbath which God had instituted at the time of creation and then included in the Ten Commandments. The one in seven concept that very clearly not only provided for a time of refreshment and rejuvenation for the people (and the servants, sojourners, even the animals) but that was also a day dedicated to God (the command to keep it holy or set apart). Douglas Stuart says of the repetition of this command:

| Exodus (Two Six-Seven Laws on Sabbath Years and Sabbath Days (23:10–12))

In a culture based heavily on the written word, such a repeated law might (wrongly) not be thought entirely necessary; but in the ancient world as well as the modern, the *repetition of a law so easily broken, in language slightly different from the original on which it is based, has the benefit of reinforcing the import of what is commanded and of showing as well its relevance* to living out Yahweh's covenant in all its details

So, what do these two commands (or truly one singular expanded command) have to do with us today. Many of course have made the argument that because we are no longer under the law, but under grace, we are no longer bound by the moral law. Even more dismaying are those who would say that we are only bound by 9 of the 10 moral laws of God and claim that the law of the sabbath is no longer part of what should be obeyed... but to do this undermines the very foundation of God's intent in the law regarding the keeping of the sabbath, the principle of the sabbath, which is one day in seven dedicated to resting in the finished work of Christ.

Ultimately, the sabbath, as Christ teaches in Mark 2:27-28

Mark 2:27-28 LSB

And Jesus was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

"Consequently the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

reminding, or teaching, that the purpose of the sabbath was to help, not burden. By the time Jesus was born, the Israelites had so contorted the law of the sabbath and sought to define it in every possible capacity (walking 99 steps was ok, but 100 was work, carrying anything heavier than a cup of tea, writing on anything that was permanent, you get the picture) that they had lost sight of the fact that it was made to help men by providing a day to rest from labors, and not just men (mankind) but even the beasts of burden were to be given a day of rest.

Ultimately, however, the Old Testament concept and biblical principle finds its fulfillment in Christ. By accomplishing everything necessary for our salvation we can rest in Him knowing that we are saved fully and completely. This is the foundation of the argument that is made regarding the strict keeping of the sabbath, that each day should be filled with worship of Him and while I wholeheartedly agree that our everyday lives

should be filled with constant worship of Him, I do not agree that this removes the biblical principle that we find here.

Keep in mind the truth that everything that God does is ultimately for His glory, which means that it is for our good. If this is the truth, then it should alter the way that we view the biblical principle of the sabbath slightly. Please do not misunderstand, I am not suggesting that the principle is not fulfilled in Christ, what I am emphatically stating is that BECAUSE the principle finds its fulfillment in Christ then all the more reason to set aside one in seven to devote to worshipping our Lord, not out of obligation to be like the pharisees and have a strict, staunch, white-knuckled response to the law, but out of a desire to gather with the saints to bring praise and honor and glory to the one who saved us. Yes we should rest from our physical labors but we do so because we now understand that this is a good gift from God, that it is for our good, and that even in this resting, we are to bring glory to Him. One more comment about this before we move to the remainder of the text. Verse 12 contains the clause "may refresh". This word in the Hebrew language can also be translated breath in, or take a breath, the concept behind this is a refreshment from a weary state. Our daily lives in this fallen, broken, destitute world can not only be physically, emotionally and mentally exhausting but most importantly spiritually devastating. We are continually bombarded with what Paul called the "flaming arrows of the evil one". Hopefully, you spend time studying God's word individually, seeking daily His guidance, wisdom, discernment, direction, protection, etc. but there is something to be said about coming to the House of the Lord, joining together with the people of God in worship and fellowship that brings about true spiritual rejuvenation, this is why the writer of Hebrews tells us Hebrews 10:24-25

Hebrews 10:24–25 LSB

And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Brothers and sisters, this is the Lord's day, let us be glad and rejoice in it!!!

Spiritual Service of Worship

Ultimately truly Biblical Worship is a gathering of the people of God in corporate worship. As we have just seen the writer of Hebrews encourages us to gather together, frequently, but this concept was not new. Here in our text for this morning the Israelites were specifically commanded that they were together three times per year. This did not mean that these were the only moments of corporate worship but these were times when the whole of the nation gathered together. Note in verse 14 and then again in verse 17 they are told "Three times a year", verse 14 stating that there is to be a feast to Me and verse 17 says that the "men are to come before the Sovereign Yahweh". Before we get into the specifics of the commands and their implications in our lives today we must point out that just as the sabbath commands, these commands are in light of the overarching command of exclusive obedience to and faith in Yahweh. The commands in verse 14 and 17 of "to Me" and "before Lord Yahweh" serve as a staunch reminder that they will be conducting themselves in the presence of the Almighty God. As we have discussed in weeks past, and will discuss more in the weeks to come, God is VERY SPECIFIC about how to worship Him and as we see in many places in Scripture, God deals swiftly with those who worship wrongly. To put this in a frame of reference to help us understand the seriousness of this, I would recall the words of Paul earlier, that we are to present our "bodies as a sacrifice, living and holy to God". The old hymn had it just right:

"I hear the Savior say, "Thy strength indeed is small! Child of weakness, watch and pray, find in Me thine all in all." Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow" - Elvina M. Hall

All to Him we owe, that is our reasonable and spiritual act of worship, but we should be wary that we remember that this worship is in the very presence of the Almighty and that if we do not worship rightly, we do not worship at all. Thanks be to God that this understanding of rightly worshipping Him does not depend on us to figure out what is good and pleasing and acceptable in His sight, He instructs us today, just as He instructed the Israelites. In these verses regarding the feasts that they were to keep and the rules regarding the keeping, we find principles that can direct our worship today.

First, as we have already noted they were specifically commanded to gather as the nation three times per year. This was to be a gathering of all the

people, verse 17 says men, but this is in the view of men as the heads of the household who would lead their entire family together for this event. Later God expounds on the specifics of these gatherings and the command in 17 actually deals with the courtyard of the tabernacle where the men only would gather for the work of the sacrifice, the whole family would make the pilgrimage, or a physical journey that marks progress towards a spiritual goal, to the central location (later Jerusalem) for the celebrations. Again, part of these commands look forward to the time when they would inhabit the nation of promise God will give them.

It is also worth noting that these are what are known as apodictic laws, meaning that they are to be applied, without exception to all Israel at all times, they are in a word, absolute commands.

God's command here, through Moses, is specifically regarding the feast of unleavened bread, harvest and ingathering. Each of these feasts, over the passage of time, would also become associated with additional celebrations but God instituted these feasts with a two fold purpose: (1) to commemorate specific events in the life of Israel and (2) to remind them that it was He who made these events a reality. Briefly:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread were the seven days immediately following passover and was to commemorate the deliverance of the God's people from the bondage of sin and slavery. This coincided with the spring, falling just after the harvest of the winter crop of barley and the spring planting of the rest of the crops.

The Feast of Harvest, which is also associated with the Feast of Weeks and eventually with Pentecost, was to commemorate the giving of the Law of God on Mt Sinai. In the Greek the word Pentecost literally meant 50 days, marking the 50 days between the leaving Egypt and the giving of the Law, later the departure of Christ and the giving of the Spirit. This helped the people to remember the gracious deliverance of God, his covenant faithfulness, and the provision of God as this feast would occur immediately following the first grain (typically wheat) harvest.

The Feast of Ingathering, which is also the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths or Succoth, was immediately following the general harvest of the remainder of the crops. This feast occurred 5 days after the day of atonement. It would commemorate the way the Israelites had lived (and

would live even though they didn't yet know it) after their departure from Egypt and the saving work of God during that time. All of the Feasts were marked with offerings and sacrifices, but this particular feast called for much sacrifice (192 animal sacrifices over 8 days) demonstrating to the Israelites the true costs of their sin.

Obviously we no longer observe these specific Feasts today, but that does not mean that there is not still significance in the occurrence of these feasts nor do they lack any implication in the way in which we worship today. Above all else, these feasts teach us about the saving work of God that was to come in the person of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:26

Hebrews 9:23–28 LSB

Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ did not enter holy places made with hands, *mere* copies of the true ones, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy places year by year with blood that is not his own.

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

Since, He, Christ, Himself was the One sacrifice to bear the sin of the elect, we are no longer bound by sacrifice, but each gathering of the people of God (which by notation of three times per year indicate to us should be repeatedly and in fact the early church in the NT gathered daily) should be a celebration and reminder of that once for all sacrifice, that brought us out

of the bondage of Sin, of the sanctification that He will sanctify us with (the journey from Egypt to the promise land for the Israelites), and the full and complete welcoming into the presence of God. In John 7:37 we find these words "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." This feast, the feast, was the fest of the ingathering, once again commemorating the journey from Egypt to the Promise land, one that is marked with seeking water for life, and Jesus here identifies Himself as the fulfillment of that by proclaiming that He was the water of life. Phillip Ryken rightly says regarding us gaining a true understanding of our salvation through the events and feasts in the Old Testament:

Exodus—Saved for God's Glory The Lamb's High Feast

Jesus is the source of our sanctification, the firstfruits of our resurrection, the Lord of the harvest, the water of life, and the sacrifice for our sin. This is the gospel according to Moses, as recorded in Exodus 23.

Not only do we find reminders that Christ is the fulfillment of all of the Law and the Prophets, but we also find specific instructions to us in our worship as detailed in the commands given here regarding the feasts. First note the commands:

1. None of you should appear before me empty handed
2. You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread
3. You shall not leave the fat of My feast till morning
4. You shall bring in the choice first fruits of the ground
5. You shall not boil a young goat in the milk of its mother

Each of these has something to teach us individually regarding our Spiritual Service of Worship

1. Again the word in the Greek used in Romans 12:1 is the word service and we add worship because of the context, worship should be defined as all of the actions of our life bringing glory and honor to God. With this in mind, we always come before him desiring to give our very lives to Him. This is a daily commitment. This is not an effort to gain or win salvation by some means but rather in response to the salvation that He has given we surrender all that we are, daily, moment by moment, to the Living

God.

2. There are a couple of different thoughts regarding this particular statement and each has validity and meaning to us even today. The first was that the blood represented the cost of salvation and the leaven, as is throughout Scripture, represents the pervasiveness of sin in our life. If we compare this with the command from Romans, we understand that we are not to defile the salvation that has been purchased by the precious blood of Christ by returning or retaining the sin in our life. Paul describes it in Romans 6:12–13 “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” The second thought deals with the pagan practices of the people surrounding the Israelites. Many of these peoples practices what we would define today as sympathetic magic, which is the ritualistic use of an object to gain power or influence over that object or event. In this case, since the blood was considered life, the consumption of blood, by either drinking it or baking/cooking it into other dishes (hence the leavened bread), they would be able to strengthen or prolong their life. This would directly deal with idolatry and lack of faith of the provision of God. Again, both of these contain merit and in the final analysis both point to the prevention of sin continuing to reign in the life of a believer.
3. The command of God was that the fat, considered to be the juiciest, choicest portion belonged to God and was to be fully consumed in the sacrifice. To allow it to remain till morning would mean that they held something back from God. This actually ties into the next command as well.
4. In reading this specific command one should be drawn back to the historical narrative regarding Cain and Abel and has to do with properly honoring God and our inward attitude towards that honoring. The command is not only that we give of the first fruits, but of the best fruits. He, in all things deserves our very best. All that we do is an integral part of our daily worship, or daily spiritual service of worship. Often we hold the best of our time and efforts to the things we desire to spend them on, versus spending time with God. How easily do we push Him to the

side for our own purposes.

5. Lastly, this particular statement has never been fully understood, it has been used by Jewish people as a command to not mix meat and dairy, it has been thought to have to do with not taking the paschal lamb and its mother (would be foolishness) but I believe that the explanation that most appropriately aligns with the theme of the text regarding exclusive and proper obedience to God in covenant is as follows. This was again a practice of sympathetic magic. In ancient Canannite texts there is descriptions of this being done and the mixture then being poured onto trees and crops in an effort to increase the bounty, calling on the gods of the planting and the harvest to make it more plentiful. It is also said to make the herds more robust. Either way, the danger again is that the trust is placed in anything other than God for provision.

While these each have an individual point to make to us today, collectively they all speak to the truth that proper worship before God is an absolute requirement of true worship before God. Again, this is something that we should take great heed of in the church today as we so often seek our own experiences, feelings, desires and ways to “worship” which is no worship at all.

In conclusion, **Soli Deo Gloria**—“to the glory of God alone”—is the heart of our Christian faith and practice. This principle reminds us that every aspect of our lives, including our worship, must be focused on God's glory. Whether in our daily actions, our obedience to His commands, or our corporate gatherings, we are to seek His glory above all else.

We are reminded again that Paul writes in Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” This reflects a life fully surrendered to God, echoing the Scripture’s call to worship God alone, without distraction or idolatry. Exodus 23:13 reinforces this by urging us to avoid even the mention of other gods, focusing all worship and trust on Yahweh alone.

Our understanding of God's glory leads us to approach worship—both private and corporate—as acts of devotion to the Almighty. We are to

gather with His people, offer our best, and remember that Christ has fulfilled all sacrifices. Through this lens, we are continually reminded that everything we do is a response to God's unmerited grace, designed for His glory and our good. Let us live daily in light of this truth, seeking to glorify God in all things—Soli Deo Gloria!