

Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 12, Exodus 23-24

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 12, Exodus 23-24.

As we wait, let's review a little bit. Let's look at the material that we covered last week. Any luck? Got it? Okay. All right. Pardon? No. They're there. You can pick them up on the way out. Good. Thank you so much, Ben. We started out talking about the Hebrew servants.

That was in 21:1 to 11. Then we talked about personal injury. That is in 21:12 to 27.

And then a kind of an interesting little interlude. Injury by an animal through negligence. This is particularly that goring ox thing.

Some Bibles that have headings will put this, and that's 21:28 to 32. Some Bibles that have headings will put this section with number 2 here. Others will put it with number 4, which is personal property.

Because that begins talking about animals and other people's animals. If my ox gores your ox and that sort of thing. So an interesting sort of transitional section there.

That's 21, 33 through 22, 15. And then the fifth section is social responsibility. And that extends into our chapter for tonight, 22, 16 through 23, 9. And we'll stop there because we'll cover the other material later.

So, that's the layout of the covenant stipulations. And we'll talk about the significance of that in a few moments as we go along. So, 23:1 to 9. What do these laws have in common in particular? Obviously, as we said, it fits into this larger section.

But these laws, 23:1 to 9, have a little more in common with one another than merely the general heading that we've got here. Well, what do these laws have in common? Justice, relationships of one person to another, bearing false witness. Can we be any more particular than that? Things that they have in common.

They're all commandments. They're about the perversion of justice. Don't spread false reports.

Don't help a guilty person by being a malicious witness. Don't follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, don't pervert justice by siding with the crowd.

Don't show favoritism to a poor person in his lawsuit. If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. Now, that's moving it a little step beyond perversion of justice.

What are we talking about here? To your enemy. If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you falling down under its load, don't leave it there.

Be sure you help them with it. So, we're not really talking about perversion of justice now. We're talking about doing justice to your enemy, to somebody who hates you.

Don't we see the beginning of the golden rule? Sure, we do. Sure, we do. Yes.

Yes. Don't deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. Now put that together with verse 3. What does verse 3 say you're not supposed to do? Don't show favoritism to the poor person.

Verse 6: don't deprive the poor person of the justice that is theirs. So, it's talking about strict justice. Have nothing to do with a false charge.

Don't put an innocent or honest person to death. I'll not acquit the guilty. Don't accept a bribe.

For a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the innocent. Don't oppress a foreigner. You yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners because you were foreigners in Egypt.

So, there's a sense in which, as we move from here, we really conclude on the same note in 23.9. Don't oppress your servants because you were a servant. Don't oppress the foreigner because you are a foreigner. And again, it's a bit of the golden rule.

You know what was done to you? Don't you do that to other people who don't deserve that. And there's a sense of movement as we come to the close here with this emphasis upon not perverting justice. Do justice.

Don't pervert it. I am running through. OK, so I said two weeks ago, I guess.

These are the examples for which the Ten Commandments are the principles. Which Ten Commandments are these the example for, though? All of them? That's right. That's right.

These are examples of the last six. Honor your father and mother. Don't steal. Don't lie. Don't kill. Don't commit adultery.

Don't covet your neighbor's possessions. So again, there is heavy emphasis on that side of the thing. You are demonstrating that you are in a covenant with Yahweh because of the way you treat other people.

In a real sense, Jesus says this same thing, but in a much more brief and positive way. John 13:35. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

I always am impressed by that. You know, by this, all men will know you're my disciples. You go to church all the time.

By this, all men will know you're my disciples. You speak in tongues. By this, all men will know that you're my disciples.

You're really, really disciplined. Now, that's not to say that we don't have commands for that sort of behavior elsewhere in the scripture, but that point that he's making is the way you treat other people will be the clearest evidence that you belong to me. That's pretty easy to talk about.

Not so easy to do. And this is what John Wesley means when he says there is no holiness except social holiness. That is holiness that's lived out in social contact.

It is so significant that many of these examples are given to that side of the covenant responsibility. And I say again what I've said several times before and will say several times again. It's not that God says, now look, I'm the king, you're the slaves, and I say do this.

No, this is in the context of the covenant. You're in covenant with me. I'm in covenant with you.

How do you demonstrate your relationship to me? You demonstrate it thus far in relation to others. All right, anything further there on 23:1-9? Okay, let's go ahead with 23:10-19. What are these about? Sabbath keeping the three main feasts. Okay, these now are about worship.

These are about; if this is about the relation to others, this is now about the relationship to God. Let's begin by looking at verses 10-12. For six years, you're to sow your fields and harvest the crops.

During the seventh year, let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then, the poor among your people may get food from it. The wild animals may eat what is left.

Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not do work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest so that

the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed. Why do we keep the sabbatical year and the Sabbath according to this passage? Yes, but who in particular? Land and harvest.

Yes, yes. There are, it's interesting, the Sabbath is talked about again and again and again throughout the Pentateuch, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And it's interesting to see the various justifications for the Sabbath that are given.

But here, in particular, there's this sense in which we're getting even here a connection. Our worship of God has an effect on others. Because we worship Him in the sabbatical year, the poor can get food from it.

Because we worship the Lord on the Sabbath day, the ox and the donkey may rest. It doesn't say anything about our rest. It says the animals get a chance to rest so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed.

So even here, there's this element of social responsibility, of connection between the two. I don't worship God for myself. I don't worship God in my own lonely isolation.

I worship God because of the effect on others. And that's why in Isaiah 58, Isaiah just castigates them for their fasting because their fasting is for themselves.

And while they're fasting, because they're fasting, they're hungry, and they're very short-tempered, and they beat up their servants. And Isaiah says if you want to stop doing something, stop beating up your servants, and eat up. So again, is this worship for me, or is it, in fact, at least having residual benefits for others around me? So, I think that's quite significant in the way that it's laid out here.

Now, then, look at verse 13. What's this doing in here between the Sabbath commandments in 10 through 12 and the festivals in 14 through 19? What's going on there? Why is this verse stuck in here? Be careful to do everything I've said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods.

Do not let them be heard on your lips. What's that doing here? Okay. Okay, I think that's exactly right.

There's a sense in which this is the negative of the positive. Worship me in these ways. Sabbath festivals don't slip up, and worship other gods in their own ways.

So, I'm constantly trying to pull this in. Hey, worship is worship, huh? There are a thousand ways to heaven. One god's as good as another.

Nope. Not in this covenant. Not in this covenant.

You shall not worship any other gods. As I said when we were talking about that with the Ten Commandments, that's a teaching device. There aren't any other gods.

If you slip up and start worshiping one here and one there, you're going to lose the whole point and forget there's only one God. So that drive there is important. I think there's another element that is significant that we'll talk about with these next ones now.

14 through 19. Three times a year. I suspect we've talked about this before, but as I've said before, repetition is the soul of education.

You did get that. Repetition is the soul of education. In case you didn't hear me, repetition is the soul of education.

The first of the three is Passover. The second of the three is Pentecost. And the third of the three will be called later on Tabernacles.

It's here called the Feast of the In-Gathering. Now we know that these two events occur at the same time as pagan festivals. And almost certainly, that is on purpose.

This one occurs about April 1st. As I've said to you before, the Hebrew calendar was a lunar calendar. So, it tended to move in terms of the solar system.

And every three years, on an average, they had to add a month. Three times in 19 years to get it to work out. So that's why these festivals move.

And that's why Easter moves. So this one is the beginning of harvest. In terms of the harvest year, it's the new year.

There are two new years in the ancient Near Eastern calendar. This one and then the other one. This occurs before the barley harvest begins.

This one occurs 50 days later, roughly, and again, round figures, June 1st. And I know that's 60 days. This occurs between the barley harvest and the wheat harvest.

Barley is finished. Wheat is beginning. Then you have various other crops that are gathered through the year.

Early figs are here. Later on, you have a second crop of figs. Eventually, you have olives and, finally, grapes.

This festival occurs about October 1st. And this is the other new year, the end of the harvest. You're getting ready now to plow and plant, and so on and so forth.

Depending on what culture you were part of and which new year you observed. This one, as I said, is olives and grapes. In this one, the pagans are rehearsing the victory of the gods over the chaos monster.

They have defeated her and have spread out her body to be the earth and perhaps the heavens. And this is happening all the time, of course. And by telling the myth, you plug into that and make sure that chaos won't gain control again this year.

The Hebrews, of course, are celebrating God's victory over the death angel because of the blood of the lamb. The pagans are celebrating a mythical event. The Hebrews are celebrating a historical event.

God has broken into time and space once for all. And we are not reenacting, but remembering. Now, many people in the time of Christ, Jews from around the world would save up for a journey to Jerusalem.

They would often combine these two, so that this period of time, between roughly April 1st and June 1st, the city of Jerusalem would be jam-packed—ten times its normal population.

When you get those kinds of crowds together, you have riot potential. And that was very common, that there would be riots during this time. That's why Pilate was in Jerusalem instead of Caesarea, which is where his capital was.

He normally didn't touch Jerusalem—a bunch of crazy Jews. Forget them.

I'll live in the Roman city of Caesarea on the coast. It's a lot more comfortable than Jerusalem. But he's here because he needs to be on the spot.

The next riot breaks out. And, of course, that's what happened. You had a riot and got this fellow from Nazareth crucified.

But that would often be the case. Where you have enough money to go to Jerusalem once in your lifetime, and this is it. Tabernacles, in Deuteronomy, the explanation, well, I should back up and say, the pagans at this point are wanting to make sure that the dying god of vegetation has a really, really good funeral.

So, he'll come back next spring and not get in a snit and stay in the underworld. So, you do all the stuff needful to do to make sure that the god of vegetation knows you're really, really sorry that he's leaving. So, you cry, you cut yourself, you go through all the rituals of mourning to make sure that he understands.

Coupled with this, though, you are also celebrating the end of harvest and the new wine. And so, this is also, among the Greeks, the festival of Bacchus. Bacchus, of course, is the god of liquor.

So, you're not only weeping over the dead god, you're also engaging in sexual orgies to make sure that there's new life for the coming year. The Hebrews are supposed to spend this week living in shacks out in their fields, remembering that their parents spent 40 years in shacks because of their sins. This all closes with the day of atonement, when the Hebrew people, like their pagan neighbors, are weeping.

But they're not weeping for a dead vegetation god. They're weeping for the unintentional sins that they have committed in the last year. So, these festivals, for certain, these two, probably this one as well, are intentionally scheduled right against the pagan festivals.

So, when people say, well, Easter, oh my goodness, why do we celebrate Easter when we do? Well, it's because of the Romans and their New Year festival. Yeah. Why do we celebrate Christmas when we do? Jesus probably wasn't born on December 25th.

That's when the Romans celebrated their Saturnalia, the midwinter festival. Yeah. So there's a good reason why the Christian festivals should be when they are, precisely as this was done, something to stand in the face of this gorgeous, exciting stuff that the pagans were doing.

To stand in the face and say, no, no, we're not manipulating the cosmos to make it do what we want. We're remembering what God has done for us and what we should have been doing in response to him. So, these three festivals are there for that particular reason.

Yes. This may be off the subject and lead into another study or something, but I just want to ask, it may not be appropriate to follow through, but my Bible gives a note here that only men were allowed to participate in this. Well, yes.

Again, the temple, the tabernacle that we're going to talk about next week, but the temple was laid out. This was the court of the Gentiles. Gentiles could go there, and there was a wall around here with the inscription. Any Gentile who passes this is responsible for his own death.

Then you have the court of the women. So Jewish women were permitted there where the Gentiles were not. Then you have the court of the men, only Jewish men permitted there and the court of the priests.

So, women were invited to participate in the general celebrations. And that's why Mary came with Joseph for the Passover, that sort of thing. But as far as actually participating in some aspect of the ritual, you're right; it was men.

I guess what I'm, in this Exodus, God is molding his people, but here there is established then a very clear difference which seems to be in valuing men and women. What's God's wisdom here? Because that goes all the way through and doesn't really get worked out until Christ. Yes, and some would say it didn't get worked out then.

Well, again, you're dealing with the culture as it stood. It's interesting that Paul will say a woman should not wear her hair loose. Why not? Well, because in Roman culture, only prostitutes wore loose hair.

So we do not want to send the wrong message. We do not want to give offense that will stand in the way of an understanding. So, in the same way, women would not have, in the pagan religion, women would not have been involved either in these kinds of ways.

Now, you've got priestesses who were involved, but the ordinary women would not. So, it's really part of the time rather than some sort of a specific statement. In many ways, and I think the principle really here, not only in this instance, but in so many others, is not in comparing it to some absolute standard in the end, but saying, where did they stand in relationship to everything around them? In this regard, in many ways, the Old Testament is ahead in terms of the freedoms and the rights it gives to women.

So that if a man refuses to give a woman her rights in terms of redeeming her from poverty, she can spit in his face. That's a pretty, pretty significant right she has in those circumstances. So, in that sense, it's really comparative, but you're right.

At this stage in the game, women are certainly not given any degree of equality. Well, it means that from now on in this community, this guy is going to be the guy who got spit in his face. For the rest of his life, he's going to be known as somebody who refused to give a woman her rights.

Doctor. There is a functional distinction. Compared to divorce.

Oh, oh, oh. Well, I've not heard that. I don't know exactly where that would come from.

But yes, she has these rights. She has a right to be redeemed. She has a right to bear children to her husband, who has died.

She has a right to her brother-in-law. It always doesn't seem to me like a very big right, but anyway. She has a right to bear children for her husband and that right cannot be taken from her.

Okay, let's push on here. So, you notice verse 15. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv.

For in that month, you came out of Egypt. Then in 18 and 19, you have a couple of specifics. Don't offer the blood with anything containing yeast.

And as we've talked before, yeast is symbolic of sin. In its capacity for decay and promoting decay. Fat must not be kept till morning.

This always fascinates me because in many cultures, fat is considered a delicacy. And the Israelites are not permitted to eat fat. It has to be burned on the altar.

The fat belongs to God. And again, I think this is the most precious part of the animal. I will never forget the experience that I had in Romania.

When I was preaching in a church in the evening in a village, Went to the house where I was staying. And the lady of the house met me at the door in her Romanian regalia.

A beautifully embroidered vest, skirt, and headdress. And had in her hands a platter. And on the platter were mounded up almost perfect cubes of white stuff.

And I thought, my, my, isn't that nice. She's met me with candy. So I grabbed a piece.

Cold, pure fat. Lard. You like? You like?

Another, another. And she was giving me the best. So here it is.

You don't leave the fat. You burn it. Yes.

In southern cultures, you would go visit, and they would cut off pieces of fat and hand them around. And everybody would chew on the fat. It was considered a delicacy.

Yep. Lard is, too. To each his own.

But the fat is God's. Every part of the fat belongs to him. There's been a lot of discussion about this last one.

Don't cook a young goat in its mother's milk. It is attached again and again, three different times, to worship directions. And, and there's some possibility that this was something that was a characteristic of pagan worship.

And that's probably still the best guess as to what's going on here. That pagans do this. Don't you do it.

Okay. Now then. If verses 21, one through 23, 19 are the stipulations for the people in the covenant.

What are 23:20 through 33? Yes. In this covenant, I want you to do this and this and this. And in return, I will do this and this and this.

What is it in particular that God swears to do in these stipulations? Okay. Fellowship. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. What else? Protection. Mm-hmm.

And what else? Protection is what I'm thinking of. What does he promise to do? That's right. He promises to take them into the land.

You keep your side of the covenant and I'll keep my side. I'll give you fellowship with me. I'll give you protection from your enemies, and I will take you into the land.

Now, why those particular things, do you think? That was his big concern. He wants to keep them. That's right.

That's right. And he promises that he will keep them. He'll keep them.

If they will keep themselves from idolatry, he will protect them from the nations and the demonic forces that might be involved on the way. All the way through here, he keeps making some requirements, though. 21.

Don't rebel against him. He won't forgive your rebellion. And all the way through, we have the Lord and the angel of the Lord.

And we've talked a bit before about what's going on there. And it may well be that the angel of the Lord is something like the spirit of God in the sense that this is God's representation in this world. We really have very little understanding how the Trinity work together and function together.

But this would be my best take on it, that the angel of the Lord is the equivalent of the spirit of the Lord. Again, back to verse 21 there. Don't rebel against him.

He won't forgive your rebellion. Rebellion, of course, speaks of intentional sin. And this is the idea that I'm going to do what I want.

And when I'm done, I'll demand that God forgive me. And Moses says and Joshua says after that, don't count on it. Don't sin with impunity, expecting God to forgive you.

He won't do it. Now, notice verse 29. He says I'm going to drive out the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites.

I won't drive them out in a single year because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. Little by little, I'll drive them out before you until you've increased enough to take possession of the land. As we look at the conquest, we see three or four factors playing into all of this.

We don't have a kind of a Second World War conquest where an occupying army moves across the land, and in front is the enemy, and behind is occupied territory. What we have in the conquest of the land is much more like a guerrilla operation. And this reflects that.

It's not going to be just a sweeping takeover. It's going to be capturing the key cities, capturing crossroads, capturing communication routes, that kind of thing. And it's going to be a matter of time.

Archaeologists today, skeptical archaeologists often say, well, there's no evidence for a conquest. What kind of evidence does a guerrilla takeover leave for us? Not much, not much. And that's the kind of thing that is implied here.

This is going to be a process. It's going to be little by little. It's not going to be a bang.

It's going to be a process. Now, of course, verse 31 gives Arab folks heartburn—your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, from the desert to the Euphrates.

Now, that's a kind of diagonal kind of thing, so from the Red Sea down here to the Mediterranean and from the desert to the Euphrates and all of that. And, of course, today Syria is located here.

And they read this and say, we know what the Jews are after. And the Israelis can say, no, no, we're content with what we've got. And the Arabs say, we can read your Bible.

So this, I think we're talking here about the Solomonic Kingdom and not necessarily some eternal kind of thing. That is forever given. But nevertheless, this kind of thing causes anguish.

Notice where it ends. Verses 32 and 33. Right where it began at the end of chapter 20.

Now, again, we say, well, he's got paranoid about this. And the answer is yes. These people are surrounded by pagans.

The entire world believes that this world is God and there is nothing else. And God is saying that's wrong. It's wrong from top to bottom.

There's the pagan idea. This world, human, nature, and divine, all mixed up together. This psychosocial, physical cosmos is God.

That's God. That's God. And this is God.

That's the world in which they live. And God is saying that's wrong. It's not right.

God is not this world. God, if you will, contains this world. And there is a hard and fast boundary between us and him.

If we try to make ourselves God, it's going to fail every time. And in the same way, there's a hard and fast boundary between humanity and nature. Don't have sex with a cow.

She's not the same order of being that you are. This point of view says, yes, you probably should have in ritual contact. Just to make it clear, there are no boundaries between you and nature.

Absolutely. Yes. And there are no boundaries between male and male.

There are no boundaries between father and daughter. There are no boundaries around a marriage. There are no boundaries.

If you allow boundaries, this thing won't work. You don't have to look very far in our society to see that thing occurring. There are no boundaries.

I can do what I please. I'm in control. And unless I exert my power, I'm going to get walked on.

So, God is saying over and over and over, don't mess with this. Don't have anything to do with it. It's wrong.

Because he's introducing a whole new understanding of reality. Of course, there are many gods. Look at the world.

No, there's one God. God is the world. No, God is not the world.

You can't make him in the image of anything in this world, et cetera. Okay. Chapter 24.

Seven minutes. All right. We come now to the sealing of the covenant.

And we have several interesting things that take place. First of all, we have a prequel in verses 1 and 2. The Lord said to Moses, come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nate, Evan, by you and 70 of the elders of Israel.

You're to worship at a distance. Moses alone is to approach the Lord. The others must come, not come near and the people may not come up with him.

That's what happens later. That's what happens in verses 12 and following. And the scholars discuss why it is introduced here in these two verses.

And there's really no agreement on that answer. I would suggest that it's simply, as I say, a prequel. This is where we're going.

We're going toward this face-to-face contact of the people in their representatives with God. Okay. So, number one, Moses recites the covenant.

And he gets agreement. Yes, we're going to do this. Then, he erects 12 pillars.

Then he sacrificed 12 bulls. Then he reads the covenant from the book where he has written it. And again, the people agree.

Then, oh, excuse me, I left one out, sorry. If you're writing down, you have to use your eraser. He splashed half of the blood on the altar.

He read the covenant and the people agreed. And he splashed the other half on the people. Now, what's going on here? He's following the pattern of sealing a covenant that was known, again, throughout the ancient world.

Preliminary agreement. If you're not going to agree to this, we're not going to go through the rest of this. So, here's preliminary agreement.

Yes, yes, we will do this. In the pagan covenants, the political treaties, this is where you have the gods cited as witnesses. Well, you can't do that if there's only one God.

So, what do you have? You have historical markers. This is where we're not talking about something with mythical significance in Never Never Land. We're talking about something done in one place, at one time, that has significance throughout time.

So, here they are, 12 pillars that testify, yes, something happened here. I like to think of Dad loading up the family donkey for the summer vacation. And little Aby says, hey, Dad, where are we going? We going to go to Six Flags Over Jerusalem? No, no, son, I have something else in mind.

Dad, we're not doing another one of those historical vacations, are we? Yes, son, there's something I want you to see. Where, Dad? In the Jordan Valley? Where all those pomegranates are and orange trees? No, actually, it's in the Sinai Desert. The Sinai Desert? Yeah, I want you to see 12 stones.

Who are we? We are the people with whom the Almighty God once and for all entered into a covenant with us and made us a different people forever. You need to see that, son. So, these are the witnesses.

A lot of blood in 12 bulls. Half of the blood goes on the altar. What's happening? As we said when we were talking about Genesis.

Two parties to a covenant, you split a sacrificial animal in half. Animals hated covenant ceremonies. And you lay the bleeding halves down.

And the two parties to the covenant step in between link arms and say, may God do so to me if I ever break our covenant. May God come after me with a meat cleaver if I ever break this covenant. As I've said, I like to do that in marriage ceremonies.

I like to watch the groom go white. What did I just say? Half the blood on the altar. May God strike God dead if God ever breaks this covenant.

And then he reads it. Many of the political treaties demand that the covenant be read, written down, and then read to the people. So, here's the real deal here.

This was preliminary. This is the real deal. Are you going to do this? Yes, Moses, we said we were.

Okay, are you ready? You're ready. All right. I wonder if the hair on the backs of their necks stood up a little bit as that blood trickled down their faces.

What did I just agree to? And Moses said, Behold the blood of the covenant. And that night in the upper room, Jesus said, this is my blood of the covenant. One of the gospels says new covenant, but the other gospels simply quote Moses.

What's happened is you got the old covenant, which is broken. From the moment of the golden calf, if God is just, he has to kill these people. They swore in blood they would never break this covenant.

It's broken. From that moment on, the covenant stands as a curse on the people. Jesus, Jesus becomes on the one hand, the sacrifice that satisfies the old covenant.

And at the same time, he becomes the sacrificial animal through whose parts you and I pass with God to a new covenant. He satisfies the old covenant and, in the same moment, ratifies the new covenant. Behold the blood of the covenant.

Propitiation to satisfy the righteous judgment that is spoken against us. So, in this moment, they're entering into this new covenant or this covenant. Now, one more thing before I let you go.

Were they lying when they said we'll keep this covenant? Did they have their fingers crossed and their toes? They were serious. They were serious. They expected to keep this covenant.

And you know, why not? There's nothing bizarre here. God doesn't say, if you're going to be in a covenant with me, you have to jump 50 feet straight up and stay there for five minutes. There's nothing cruel here.

If you're going to be in a covenant with me, you have to eat your children. There's nothing destructive here. If you're going to be in a covenant with me, you have to eat dirt three times a day.

No, this is all stuff, some of which they were familiar with. And anything they weren't familiar with, it's, well, of course. Makes all kinds of sense.

Why wouldn't we? And the parallel that I think of is this. Someone comes to an altar to accept Christ as their Savior. And in the old language of the past, they pray through.

And they rise with the confidence that God has saved them. Their eyes are glistening. And I say to them, are you going to serve Jesus? And they say, well, of course.

Why wouldn't I? He's my Savior. I'm not going to say to them, little do you know. But they don't know.

They don't know that there's a rock in here that says, oh, I want the blessings of God. I want my sins to be forgiven, and I want to go to heaven. But I also want my way.

They don't know that. And that was the same with these people. They didn't know.

And that's the third purpose of the covenant. And with this, I will let you go. The first purpose of the covenant is to teach God's character.

And they learn by doing, as I've said several times before. What's God like? God cares about other people. To teach the character necessary in us for him to live in us.

But there's a third purpose. To teach that there is something radically wrong in the human spirit. And now, the human heart and spirit.

As we have talked about before, heart in the Old Testament is not the center of affection. It's the center of everything. It's the core of the personality.

And the Bible says it is only continually evil all the time. Genesis 6-5. As they attempt to live God's life, they discover something's wrong.

We don't want to live God's life. We want God's blessings. But we don't want to live his life.

God says I was hoping you'd figure that out sooner or later because I've got a solution for it, down the way.

Down the way. Okay. Thanks.

The study guide for next week is out there. Thanks to Ben. And we'll continue on.

I should ask you. I have scheduled a meeting on Memorial Day on Monday. My significant other suggests to me that maybe you would rather not do that.

Let me ask you to think about that and talk about it. And we'll make a decision next week whether we're going to go ahead with that or not.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 12, Exodus 23-24.