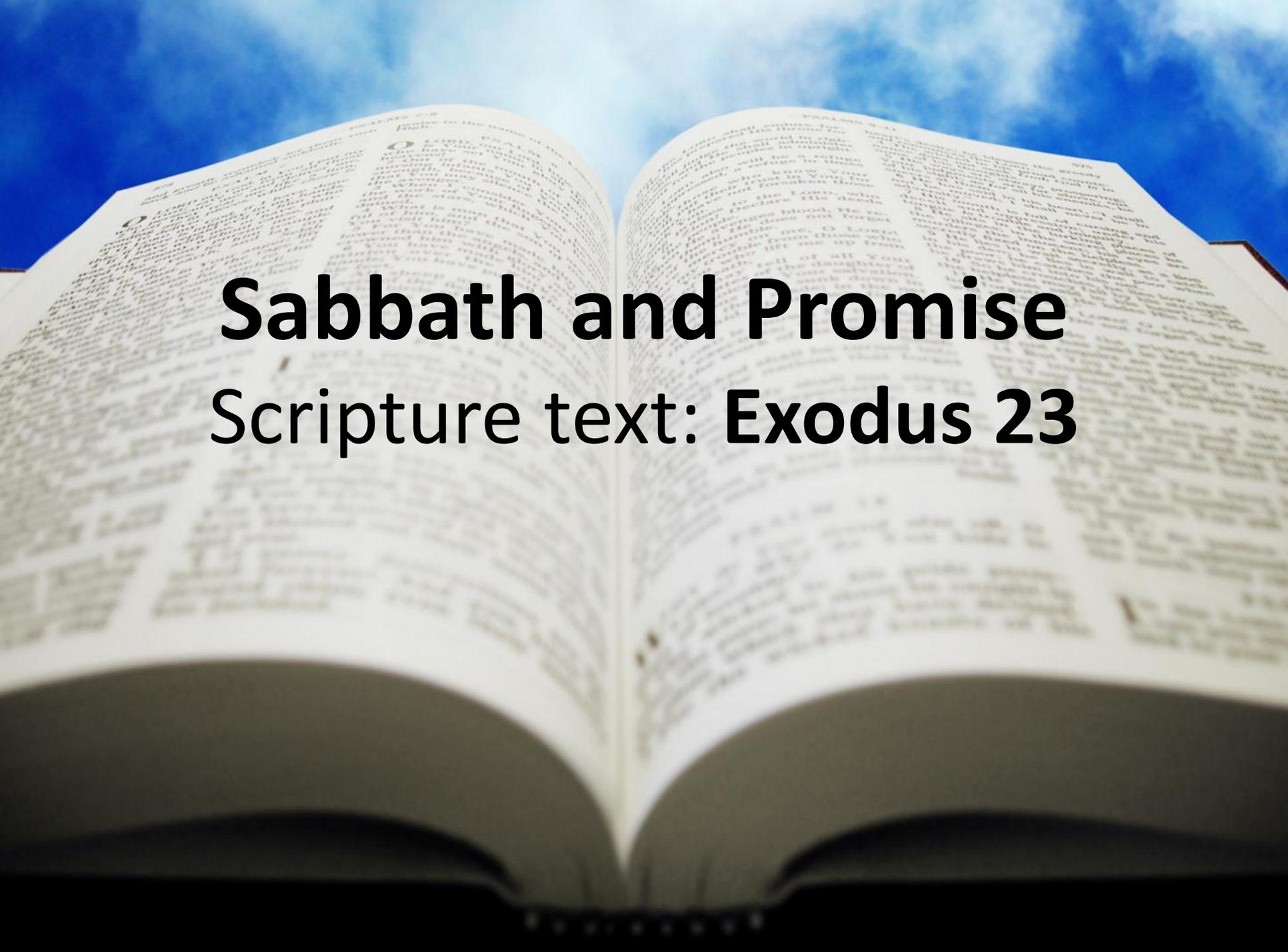


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, but it is out of focus. The background is a bright blue sky with some light clouds. The text is centered on the pages.

Sabbath and Promise
Scripture text: **Exodus 23**

Exodus 23:1-5 "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. You **shall not fall in with the many to do evil**, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, **siding with the many, so as to pervert justice**, nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit. "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; **you shall rescue it with him.**

Exodus 23:6-9 "You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. **Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked.** And you shall **take no bribe**, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. **"You shall not oppress a sojourner.** You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Dispensing Justice (23:1–9)

The judicial system in Israel, like our system of courts today, **depended on just laws, honest judges, and faithful witnesses.**

God's laws were just, but they could be deliberately misinterpreted by an unjust judge, or a lying witness could give false testimony.

Judgment was not to be influenced by numbers (v. 2), money (vv. 3, 6, 8), personal feelings (vv. 4–5), or social status (v. 9).

When it comes to applying the law, **God does not want the wicked to be justified** (v. 7; 2 Chron. 6:23).

Exodus 23:7 Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for **I will not acquit the wicked.**

2 Chronicles 6:22-23 "If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, **then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness.**

But when it comes to saving lost sinners, **God in His grace justifies the ungodly.** (Rom. 4:5) He can do this because the penalty for our sins was borne on the cross by the Son of God.

Romans 4:5-8 And to the one who does not work but **believes in him who justifies the ungodly**, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "**Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.**"

Celebrating Holy Times (23:10–19)

The worship of God and the working of the land (which belonged to God) were bound together.

Israel's religious festivals were tied to the agricultural year in a series of "sevens." See Lev. 23. The seventh day was the Sabbath and the seventh year was the Sabbatical Year. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated for seven days after Passover. **The seventh month opened with the Feast of Trumpets and included the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths).**

The weekly Sabbath **not only reminded the Jews that they belonged to God**, but it also showed God's care for the health of man and beast and the "health" of the land.

The Sabbatical Year gave even more opportunity for rest and restoration. God is concerned about the way we use the natural resources He has graciously given us. If people kept this in mind today, there would be less exploitation of both human and natural resources.

Passover speaks of the death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (Ex. 12; John 1:29); the Feast of Firstfruits is a type of His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23); and the Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of His coming again and the future kingdom of joy and fullness (Zech. 14:16–21).

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**"

Exodus 12:3-7 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall **take a lamb** according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. **Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old.** You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when **the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.** "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

1 Corinthians 15:20-25 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For **he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet**.

Zechariah 14:15-19 And a plague like this plague shall fall on the horses, the mules, the camels, the donkeys, and whatever beasts may be in those camps. Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem **shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.** And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; **there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.** This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.

Exodus 23:19 "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. **"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.**

The puzzling statement about the kid and its mother's milk relates to a **heathen practice that was a part of an idolatrous fertility rite** (see 34:26 and Deut. 14:21). Moses connected this law with the harvest festivals because that is when heathen fertility rites were practiced.

Exodus 34:26 The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. **You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.**"

Deuteronomy 14:21 "You shall not eat anything that has died naturally. You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. **For you are a people holy to the LORD your God.** "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Exodus 23:23-26 "When my angel goes before **you** and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and **I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do,** but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their pillars in pieces. **You shall serve the LORD your God,** and he will bless your bread and your water, and **I will take sickness away from among you. None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.**

Exodus 23:27-30 I will send my terror before you and will throw into confusion all the people against whom you shall come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites from before you. **I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you.** Little by little I will drive them out from before you, **until you have increased and possess the land.**

Exodus 23:31-33 And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, **for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."**

Conquering the Promised Land (23:20–33)

God promised His people victory because His angel would go before them and help them defeat their enemies, if the nation faithfully obeyed God's commandments. Their **ownership of the land was purely by God's grace**, but their enjoyment of the land depended on their faith and faithfulness.

Once in their land, the people were to beware not to imitate the idolatrous practices of the other nations.

God promised His people health, prosperity, and safety **if they obeyed Him**, for these blessings were a part of His covenant. He has not guaranteed these same blessings to His new covenant people today, but He has promised to supply all our needs and enable us to live in victory over our spiritual enemies.

Much of the “**prosperity preaching**” of our modern day is based on a misinterpretation of the **Old Covenant that God made with the Jews.**

Israel did conquer the Promised Land and destroy the cities and idols of the godless inhabitants. But gradually, **God’s people began to make peace with their neighbors and learn to worship their false gods and goddesses.** This led to discipline in the land (the Book of Judges) and eventual captivity away from the land. Before we judge Israel too severely for this, however, we need to ask how much God’s people today are compromising with the gods of this world, such as money, pleasure, and success.