

“God’s Original Plan” — Exodus 23 Study Outline

I. Setting the Scene

1. Israel fresh from Egypt

- Centuries steeped in pagan culture → needs *re-education* in God’s ways.

2. Types of biblical law

Category	Scope & duration	Examples in Exodus 23
Moral (Decalogue)	Eternal, universal	Not boiled-down here, but background to all ethics
Civil / Judicial	Governance of Israel’s society	Property, justice, festivals
Ceremonial	Worship rhythms, foreshadowing Christ	Harvest first-fruits, Sabbath year

3. Purpose of Mosaic law

- **“Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ”** (Gal 3:24) → Laws shape character & spotlight Messiah.
- Laws also **separate from pagan practice** (e.g., boiling a kid in its mother’s milk).

II. Illustrative Example — “Kid in Its Mother’s Milk” (Ex 23:19)

Observation	Significance
Canaanite fertility rite	Yahweh forbids Israel to mimic idolatrous rituals.
Principle today	Some divine “don’ts” guard minds/hearts from corrosive culture—even if the reason isn’t obvious at first glance.

III. The Angel of the LORD (Ex 23:20-23)

1. Text snapshot

- “I send an *Angel* (mal’āk = messenger)... My name is in Him.”

2. Messianic echo

- Mal 3:1 “Messenger of the Covenant” → pre-incarnate Christ leading His people.

3. Conditions & promise

- **Obey His voice** → God becomes “*enemy to your enemies.*”
- Original plan: *God Himself* would fight; Israel would *follow*.

IV. Covenant Blessings (Ex 23:24-27)

Blessing	Text	Clarification
Exclusive worship	v. 24	Israel to model monotheism to nations.
Provision & health	vv. 25-26	Is NOT a curse on the sick/infertile today; a covenant-era pledge of national flourishing.
Fear on enemies	v. 27	Psychological warfare—God breaks resistance ahead of Israel.

V. Gradual Conquest Strategy (Ex 23:28-30)

1. “Hornets” (v. 28)

- Could be literal stinging insects *or* metaphor for panic-stricken armies—either way, *divinely sent*.

2. Little-by-little displacement (vv. 29-30)

- Prevents land from becoming desolate or overrun by wild beasts (cf. 2 Ki 17:23-26).
- Illustrates God’s wisdom in timing—growth of Israel’s population will match expanding territory.

VI. Biblical Precedents for Divine Warfare

- **Red Sea** — Ex 14:13-14 “The LORD will fight for you.”
 - **Gideon vs. Midian** — Jdg 7 (300 men, God wins).
 - **Jehoshaphat** — 2 Chr 20 (praise precedes victory).
 - **Hezekiah** — 2 Ki 19 (angel slays Assyrian army).
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