

• *God has relented in response to Moses' praying*

• *If they obey they will enter Canaan*

• *The previous commands reaffirmed*

• *A reminder of what God has already demanded*

Legislation in Exodus

1. *Preliminary anticipations before Sinai*

2. *Regulations given on Sinai*

3. *Reminder and implementation*

Selected repetitions

• *Paganism*

• *Idolatry*

• *Inter-marriage forbidden*

Moses got his prayer answered! ‘Then Yahweh said, “I am making a covenant with you ...”’¹. This means that God is planning to renew the covenant that was made with Israel on Sinai² including the instructions about the tabernacle³. God has relented, in response to Moses’ praying. God’s glory will accompany Israel within the tabernacle. God will go with the people after all! Moses’ prayer has prevailed with God. God will renew the covenant that the people disregarded right from its birth. He will perform marvellous things in bringing the people to Canaan⁴. If they will obey Him, He will drive out of Canaan those nations that currently occupy it. The iniquity of the Amorites is full⁵ and the time for their removal has come⁶.

God is giving Israel another chance, but it does not mean that He has changed His mind about His law. Exodus 34:12–26 give another set of regulations. Actually there is nothing new in them. They are all repeated commands taken from Exodus 19–24. It means that the **previous** commands are being reaffirmed.

It sometimes is said that Exodus 34:12–26 are an independent collection of law, a ‘cultic decalogue’. But this way of putting it ignores the history of the time concerned. If the history of these days is closely observed it is quite plain that Exodus 34:12–26 are a selection from the regulations already given. There is nothing new in them. The Lord is letting Israel know that He is renewing the covenant but He still expects His law to be kept. He gives them a few samples to remind them of what He has already demanded. This is the sixth section of legislation in Exodus. The complete list is as follows. It falls into three groups.

1. The regulations announced **before they reached Sinai**. Some preliminary anticipations of God’s law were given: the requirement of the keeping of Passover¹, the keeping of the feast of Unleavened Bread², the Dedication of the Firstborn³. Then the people began to walk towards Sinai and a few more anticipations of the law were given. Exodus 15:25b–26 announced a simple ‘regulation’ concerning obeying God’s voice. Then a little preparation for Sabbath-keeping was demanded in connection with the collecting of manna⁴. Exodus 16:33 was an instruction which anticipated the building of the tabernacle.

2. The regulations given on Mount Sinai. There were the Ten Commandments¹, **the Book of the Covenant**² and **the tabernacle regulations**³.

3. **The reminder and the implementation**. We have some reminders of the law in Exodus 34:10–26; 35:1–3, and the story of the implementation of the tabernacle-building programme in 35:4–29.

Here we have selected repetitions of the regulations that had been given before. **Exodus 34:12** repeats 23:32–33. Pagans must not be allowed a free and easy life in Israel. **Exodus 34:13** repeats 23:24. The apparatus of paganism must be destroyed. **Exodus 34:14** repeats 20:35, 23. No other God may be worshipped in Israel. There will be no ‘freedom of religion’ in God’s state- religion. **Exodus 34:15** restates verse 12 and **34:16** explains further. Inter-marriage and tolerance of, paganism must not be allowed in the land to which the people are travelling. **Exodus 34:17** forbids what they had done already – building

1 34:10
2 19-24
3 25-31

4 34:10
5 see Genesis 15:16
6 34:11

1 12:1-13, 24-27, 43-49
2 12:14-20
3 13:1-13

4 16:4-5, 22-29

1 20:1-17
2 20:22-23:33
3 25:1-31:17

- *Three feasts*
- *Firstborn*
- *Sabbath*
- *Sanctity of blood*

an image of Yahweh^{□1}; it repeats 20:23. **Exodus 34:18** repeats 12:15–20; 23:15; 31:14. The feast of unleavened bread must be kept. **Exodus 34:19–20a** repeats 13:2, 12; 22:29. The dedication of the firstborn must continue in Israel. **Exodus 34:20b** repeats 13:13 and 23:15. The firstborn sons of Israel specially belong to Yahweh as a sign that the whole nation belongs to Yahweh. **Exodus 34:21** repeats 20:9. The Sabbath must be kept. **Exodus 34:22** repeats 13:13. The feast of weeks and of ingathering must be kept. **Exodus 34:23** reminds the people of the supreme importance of three festivals. If they are obedient at this point, God will protect their inheritance, the land of Israel^{□2}. The regulations concerning the sanctity of blood^{□3}, the eating of the Passover on one occasion^{□4}, the firstfruits^{□5} and avoidance of Canaanite customs^{□6} must all be carefully observed.

□1 see 32:4

□2 34:24
 □3 34:25a
 □4 34:25b
 □5 34:26a
 □6 34:26b

Relevance for Christians – 4 questions

1. *A pointer to Jesus?*

What is the relevance of all of this for the Christian? When the Christian reads the Mosaic law – and he should do for not a jot or tittle will be unfulfilled – he does two things. He **first** of all asks himself, ‘How do I as a Christian find a pointer to the Lord Jesus Christ in all of this?’ The answer will often be obvious. He or she will see, to take an obvious example, how the Passover points to Jesus.

2. *How will life in the Holy Spirit go beyond?*

A **second** question will be, ‘How will life in the Holy Spirit go beyond the legislation here?’

3. *How will a change in church and state relationships affect this?*

A **third** question might be, ‘How will a change in church-and-state relationships affect what I read here?’ Obviously we shall not be killing any Canaanites. We shall want people to come to faith freely and without coercion.

4. *How does life in the Spirit contrast with life under the law?*

The same point reveals a **fourth** question, ‘How does life in the Spirit contrast with life under the law?’ Under the law I might take part in killing Canaanites. In the Spirit what will be the equivalent? Bringing them to Jesus and transferring ‘Canaanites’ not out of this world, but to a new kingdom, not by execution, but by helping them to come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian is not ‘under’ the law. But he has ways of ‘fulfilling’ it by the Holy Spirit.

• *Fulfilled by walking in the Spirit*

Israel was being given a second chance, but the second chance still required the keeping of the Mosaic law. God gives Christians second chances as well and He will require that the law is not simplistically maintained in its 13th century BC form, but ‘fulfilled’, by walking in the Spirit.

 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>		
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