

# DEUTERONOMY 21-23

March 25, 2012

Today we will study **chapters 21 through 23** of the book of Deuteronomy. These chapters contain various laws that the Jews were to follow.

## **21:1-9 What are we told in chapter 21 verses 1 to 9?**

- If someone who had been murdered was found in the open country, then the city nearest that body would have to sacrifice a heifer to atone for the possibility that someone from their city had been the murderer. The elders of that city would have to confess that they had no knowledge of the crime and ask that God would not hold them accountable for this crime.

## **What are the implications of this sacrifice?**

- Something had to die to cover sin.
- The “substitute” had to meet certain criteria to qualify (21:3-4).
- A confession had to be made for the sacrifice to benefit the people.

See Hebrews 9:22. Jesus had to be without sin in order to die for sinners. See 1 Peter 3:18. Christ’s sacrificial death is of no value to us until we personally appropriate His death through repentance and confession. See Luke 13:3 [3 Not at all! And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God.] And Romans 10:9-10. [9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.]

## **What is the implication of the need to confess in verses 7-9?**

- The implication is that the innocent people could suffer for the sin of whoever committed this murder. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7), [7 Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant, but we can also reap what others sow.

## **What are some examples of reaping what others sow?**

- Mates reap what their spouses sow. Children reap what their parent’s sow. Employees can reap what their bosses/owners sow. Churches reap what their leaders sow. Citizens reap what their governments sow.

## **21:10-17 Who can explain the laws regarding taking a captive woman as a wife (21:10-14) and the rule of inheritance when a man had more than one wife (21:15-17)?**

- Have someone explain the two. Polygamy is not condemned or encouraged here – just acknowledged.

## **21:18-21 What do verses 18 to 21 say about dealing with rebellious children?**

- Rebellion in children was not to be tolerated. If the parents could not get control of their child they were to bring that child to the elders of the city who would stone that child to death.

## **What were the two motives behind such a drastic measure?**

- The evil person would be removed from their society.
- Other would-be evildoers would hear, fear, and behave appropriately.

## **How would such consequences to wrong behavior change America?**

- Teachers would spend their time teaching rather than dealing with troublemakers. There would be almost no need for jails. There would be no gangs. Crime would almost be nonexistent. Evildoers would live in fear of judgment instead of law-abiding people living in fear of evildoers. People do what they can get away with doing. **See Ecclesiastes 8:11.** [11 When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong.]

**21:22-23** Those executed for their crimes were to be buried on the day of their execution.

**22:1-4** What do we learn about our responsibility to others in **chapter 22 verses 1 to 4**?

- In one sense, we *are* our brother's keeper (**Genesis 4:9**). We cannot take advantage of our neighbor's misfortune nor can we ignore the need to help them.

**22:5** Verse 5 refers to **transsexuals** and **transvestites**. Both are now considered minorities in Western culture with protected civil rights. [5 "A woman must not put on men's clothing, and a man must not wear women's clothing. Anyone who does this is detestable in the sight of the Lord your God.] **NLT**

**22:8-12** What other things were they told to do in **verses 8 to 12**?

- By taking only the young birds or eggs, the elder bird will again reproduce. This was similar to not destroying fruit trees because they produce each year (**20:19-20**). A parapet (*PAR-uh-pet*) is a wall on the edge of a roof that would keep a person from falling off of that roof.

**22:13-21** Who can explain the law mentioned in **verses 13 to 21**?

- If a man marries a woman and claims that she was not a virgin, then her parents must bring proof of her virginity. If he is wrong, he would be chastised, fined, and be responsible for taking care of her for the rest of his or her life no matter what (*he cannot divorce her*). If he is right, then the men of the city would stone her.

**22:22-30** What do we learn about morality in **verses 22-30**?

**22:22** Both people were to die if someone had sex with someone to whom he or she was not married.

**22:23-24** If a man has sex with a virgin who is engaged to someone else, and if this takes place in the city, then both of them are to die. Being in the city, had she cried out someone would have come to her aid. Since she didn't it was consensual, illicit sex.

**22:25-27** If the same thing occurs in a field (outside of the city), the man will die but not the woman since it is assumed she cried out but no one heard who might have delivered her.

**22:28-29** If a man has sex with an unengaged virgin, then he must pay her father a dowry (**50 shekels**), marry the girl, and he can never divorce or abandon her.

**22:30** A man shall not have sex with his step-mother (his father's wife). **Leviticus 20:11** tells us that both of them were to die if this took place.

**What was the motive of these harsh penalties?**

- God wanted them to purge the evil from among them (**22:21,22,24; 21:21; 19:13**) **Read 19:19-21.**

Notice in **verses 19 and 29** that a man who violates or brings shame to a woman is responsible for her (cannot divorce her) for the rest of his life.

Various instructions were given in **chapter 23**.

**23:1-6** The *assembly of the Lord* was the gathering of the entire nation. **Who was never to be a part of these assemblies?**

- There was the congregation (**all of Israel**), the **tribes**, and then the **families**. No male whose reproductive organs were gone? No descendant of the Ammonites or Moabites was to ever enter the assembly.

#### Where did the Ammonites and the Moabites begin?

- They were the children of **Lot**, Abraham's nephew, by incest (**Genesis 19:30-38**).

#### What great promise do we have in **verse 5**?

- God turns curses into blessings for us because He loves us.

#### **23:7** Who was the father of the Edomites?

- **Esau** was the twin of **Jacob/Israel** and son of **Isaac**. Genesis 36:1 tells us that he was the father of the **Edomites**.

#### **23:12-14** Notice how practical and sanitary the Jews were to be in **verses 12 to 14**.

#### **23:15-16** What do **verses 15 to 16** tell us about the treatment of slaves in Israel?

- Slaves were obviously to be treated well in Israel. If any people should have understood this, it was the Jews since they had themselves been slaves in Egypt. A implication here is that a slave would only run off from his master if he was being mistreated. If another Jew found the runaway slave, he was NOT to return him to the abusive master but rather to help him to re-start his life.

#### **23:19-20** Notice in **verses 19 to 20** that the Jews were able to charge interest to foreigners, but never to others Jews. The text doesn't tell us, but why would they not charge interest to other Jews?

- If we find a "brother" in need, then we should seek to help that brother, not to financially profit from that brother's misfortune. In those days a loan would be for survival, not for unnecessary pleasures.

#### **23:21-23** What do **verses 21 to 23** tell us about our promises to God?

It is no sin not to make a promise, but it is a sin to make a promise/vow and not to keep it.

See **Matthew 5:33-37** [<sup>33</sup> "You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.' <sup>34</sup> But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!' because heaven is God's throne. <sup>35</sup> And do not say, 'By the earth!' because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> Do not even say, 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one.] [And **Ecclesiastes 5:4-6**. [<sup>4</sup> When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. <sup>5</sup> It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it. <sup>6</sup> Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved.] Notice the first part of **verses 23** - *You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips*. We are to be people whose word is our "bond"; we do what we say we will do. **Psalm 15** describes the man who can enter into God's presence. One of his character qualities is that *He swears to his own hurt and does not change (Psalm 15:4)*. This means that he does what he says he will do, even if he later regrets saying it and even if it ends up costing him far more than he meant to pay.

#### What percentage of people do you think actually keep their word?

- See what you get. (My belief is less than **5%** of the population keep their word John Brown)

#### What do you think and how do you feel about a person who doesn't keep his or her word?

- You are disappointed with that person, decide that you cannot count on that person, and eventually doubt all that that person says he will do.

**Can anyone give an example when you or someone you know kept his word even when it ended up costing him far more than he originally intended?**

- See what you get. (Tell the motorcycle story)