

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story
Lesson #35
“Various Laws & Instructions” • Deuteronomy 22
• HANDOUT •

► This new study lesson begins with Chapter 22 of Deuteronomy. It involves discussions on various laws and instructions to the individual. At first glance, many of these discussions seem to jump all over the place, and have only limited connection to each other.

► For clarity, we need to view these discussions through the Hebrew mindset that **information is best understood by first stating the conclusion of a given subject, followed by a detailed explanation which led to the conclusion.** A perfect example is the first chapter of Genesis. The conclusion is stated first: **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** Then what follows are the details. The creation process began with everything being without form and in total darkness. The Spirit of God then hovered over it, followed by God saying: “Let there be ...” and it all ended with a completed creation which God deemed “very good.”

► In our current study, the conclusion was stated several times, beginning in Deuteronomy 12: *Israel is not to imitate any behavior by their pagan neighbors; instead Israel must purge all evil from their midst.* The statements and discussions found in Chapter 22 are the *details* of what they must not imitate and points to the evil that must be purged from within their midst. This will include the treatment of domestic animals, the issues of cross-dressing, and the need to retain all the distinctions that God ordained at Creation, and the details of the moral integrity God expects from His people, especially in the marital arena.

Surprisingly, many of these ancient issues seem to find new life in our culture today. In some cases, our study won't feel like we are looking back at ancient historical problems, but rather it will be rehashing yesterday's news headlines.

► This begs the question: Is the Old Testament truly relevant for today's Christian? The answer is yes – more and more each and every day.

Being a good neighbor ...

► Deuteronomy 22:1-4 • If you see your brother's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him. If the brother does not live near you or if you do not know who he is, take it home with you and keep it until he comes looking for it. Then give it back to him. Do the same if you find your brother's donkey or his cloak or anything he loses. Do not ignore it. If you see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help him get it to its feet.

Q: What is the underlying sin that is being highlighted in this discussion about things lost, including animals?

The issue of Cross-dressing ...

► Deuteronomy 22:5 • A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.

Q: Does this mean that a woman must wear only skirts and dresses and a man wearing the traditional Scottish Kilt is sinful?

The next two verses reflect command to show kindness and be concerned about liability.

► Deuteronomy 22:6-8 • If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.

Q: What was the promise for showing kindness to the mother bird?

Q: Why would it be important to add a railing to the roof of one's dwelling?

The next 4 verses [9-12] are the “Laws of Separation”

1. Do not sow a vineyard with different kinds of seed
2. Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together.
3. Do not wear a garment of mixed materials, such as wool and linen mixed together.
4. The garments worn to cover oneself must have four corners of clothing with tassels.

Q: What is the underlying reasons for these four prohibitions?

• Canaanites commonly combined “unlike things” to achieve what they believed would be: _____

• The first 3 laws: _____

• The last law: _____

**The Remainder of Chapter 22 is devoted to the
Laws of Sexual Morality and Fidelity**

► Moses begins this section by discussing how an accusation of marital deception is to be resolved. He sets up the scenario that a man marries and finds that he dislikes his bride after consummating the marriage and does not wish to continue in the marriage. So if he claims she lied and was not a virgin, he would be rid of her. But this would change if her parents could display proof of her virginity to the town elders at the gate. [A Jewish woman would be intimate with her husband on their first time while lying on a special cloth. This cloth would be collected and saved. The drops of blood on the cloth – the result of her first intercourse – would be accepted as proof of her virginity.] Instead of ridding himself of an unwanted marriage, the husband would be punished for making a false accusation. He was forced to pay the wife's father a hundred shekels of silver and she would remain as his wife; in fact he would never be allowed to divorce her.

However, if there was no acceptable proof of the girl's virginity presented, she was to be stoned to death at the door of her father's house.

Q: What would these laws about sexual morality and fidelity accomplish?

► Next, Moses sets a new scenario which sets the penalty of adultery. If a man is discovered caught in the act of having sex with a woman who was married to another man, both would suffer the consequences of death, thus “putting away the evil from Israel.”

Q: What is significant about God's attitude toward adultery?

► Moses presents a new scenario regarding improper sexual relations; this time he establishes the Laws concerning Rape.

He gives this scenario three different settings.

1. First setting is in the city:

The woman is a virgin who is pledged to be married.

Being “pledged” was being betrothed.

A betrothal was a equivalent to a legal marriage that was not yet consummated

A neighbor man – not her finance – forces her to have sex with him.

She does not cry out in protest.

2. Second setting is in the countryside.

The woman is a virgin pledged to be married

A strange man rapes her.

She cries out but no one can hear her and save her or stop him.

3. Third setting locale is not determined

The woman is a virgin but she is single, not betrothed

A man forces himself on her and rapes her.

► The three scenarios have three separate and different outcomes:

1. In the first setting, both are guilty and both are given a death sentence of stoning.

Because the woman didn't protest it is presumed to have been consensual sex and not rape.

2. In the second setting, only the man is guilty and given a death sentence of stoning.

The woman was truly raped and there was nothing consensual about it.

3. In the third setting, because the woman was a virgin and not betrothed, the man had to marry her.

He also had to pay a fine of 50 shekels of silver and, according to Jewish commentators, he also had to pay her father her dowry price.

Furthermore, the marriage would never be subject to a divorce. Only death could part them.

Q: These were stark, stringent laws that served to keep one's libido in check. Our attitude toward sexual permissiveness is vastly different today. What is your opinion on the difference between then and now?

**Moses ends this discussion on Sexuality with a Law concerning Incest.
But it is not quite what we might expect from the word “incest.”**

▶ [Deuteronomy 22:30](#) • A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonor his father's bed.

Q: What does Moses mean when he says: “he must not dishonor his father's bed?”

Q: Who is being identified as “his father's wife?”

▶ [1 Corinthians 5:1-2](#) • It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

**▶ In Chapter 23 Paul continues with more instruction and Laws.
The beginning theme covers who is and who is not to be part of the Assembly
followed by various miscellaneous laws.
This is where we will pick up next time.**



Next Time • Lesson #36

“ More Instruction & Laws ”

Deuteronomy 23 <> 25

