

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story
Lesson #36
“More Instructions & Laws” - Deuteronomy 23 & 24
•HANDOUT•

► This lesson: In Chapter 23 Paul continues with more Instructions and Laws. The first instruction covers who is and who is not to be part of the Assembly of the Lord, followed by various miscellaneous laws.

► In the opening verses there are three categories of persons who are excluded from the assembly of the Lord: eunuchs, illegitimate children, and both Ammonites & Moabites. Conversely, there are subsequent verses that give permission to be part of the Assembly of the Lord to the Egyptians – those who have been part of Israel's journey since leaving Egypt – and to the Edomites.

Q: What constitutes the “Assembly of the Lord” and in what way are these specific people to be excluded?

Q: Why were those born out of wedlock prohibited from becoming part of the civil leadership?

Q: Why were Ammonites and Moabites specifically prohibited from civil leadership, yet, in the same passage, permission is given to the Edomites and Egyptians to become part of the civil leadership in Israel? [ref: verses 3-8]

Re: the Ammonites and Moabites [ref: Vs 3-6]:

Re: Edomites & Egyptians [Vs7 & 8]:

Now Moses gives some Rules for Holiness and Cleanliness
in the camp during military engagements

► Deuteronomy 23: 9-14 • "When you go to war against your enemies, be sure to stay away from anything that is impure. "Any man who becomes ceremonially defiled because of a nocturnal emission must leave the camp and stay away all day. Toward evening he must bathe himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp. "You must have a designated area outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. Each of you must have a spade as part of your equipment. Whenever you relieve yourself, dig a hole with the spade and cover the excrement.

The camp must be holy, for the Lord your God moves around in your camp to protect you and to defeat your enemies. He must not see any shameful thing among you, or he will turn away from you.

Q: With what is “holiness” identified with in this passage? [ref: Ex. 19:10-11; 30-18-21; Joshua 3:5; Psalm 51:7, 10]

Asylum is to be provided to the foreign escaped slave ...

▶ Deuteronomy 23:15-16 • If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master. Let him live among you wherever he likes and in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress him.

Q: What is the key for determining who should be given asylum?

All ritual prostitution was to be banned ...

▶ Deuteronomy 23:17-18 • No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both.

Q: What was a shrine prostitute?

No interest to be charged to an Israelite ...

▶ Deuteronomy 23:19-20 • Do not charge your brother interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest.
You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a brother Israelite, so that the LORD your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

Q: Why does Israel have a double standard regarding the charging of interest?

Making Vows ...

[This is the parallel passage to Numbers 30 • Lesson #24]

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 • If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.

Q: Vows were common in the ancient world, and were part of the OT system of offerings. However they were never required. What is the key element to the issue of making Vows?

Q: Does this include the casual vow – when we tell someone we will do something – or even promise to pray for something or someone on their behalf?

Deuteronomy 23:24-25 • If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. If you enter your neighbor's grain-field, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain.

Q: Considering the conditions placed on the “right to glean,” what was the underlying concern this law was addressing?

Moses opens Chapter 24 by setting down Laws Pertaining to Divorce, & Remarriage
This expands the discussion on the Laws of Sexual Morality and Fidelity
which was introduced in Chapter 22, lesson #35.
In fact, the first mention of a prohibition against Divorce is in Chapter 22.

► Moses first discusses Divorce. The Hebrew word for “divorce” comes from the idea of “cutting apart as though to amputate part of one's flesh.” Divorce was allowed but it was carefully regulated. It could only be initiated by a man. If a man wanted out of his marriage, he had to have cause in order to give the wife the Certificate of Divorce. If the wife was found to have some uncleanness in her, and sufficient grounds were met certifying this uncleanness, he could serve her with the Certificate. However, determining what was “unclean” became a rather loosely interpreted idea, and became greatly abused. It came to mean anything that displeased the husband –including burning his breakfast. On the most flimsy of excuses a man could give his wife a Certificate of Divorce and send her packing.

In NT times the schools of Shammai and Hillel made lists of what could constitute the basis for divorce, with the school of Shammai being more restrictive than that of Hillel. The “indecency clause” had to be less than adultery, since the punishment for adultery is death.

Jesus clarified the issue by defining what it meant to “unclean” and quashed the whimsical or frivolous notions of divorce. In Matthew 19:8-9. He said: *Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

► Moses followed the discussion of Divorce with a discussion on remarriage in ancient Israel: If the divorced wife became another man's wife, and the first husband who divorced her had a change of heart, he was not permitted to remarry her., even if the second husband died. To do otherwise would be an abomination before the LORD.

Q: What stands out to you the most regarding these laws pertaining to divorce and remarriage?

Moses Institutes a Law that will Honor Marriage in a unique manner ...

► For one year following a marriage, a man would be exempt from military duty or other state service. He would be free, at home, for one full year to bring happiness to his new wife.

Q: Why would God institute such a law?

Moses ends chapter 24 by giving a series of eight miscellaneous laws ...

1 - Do not take someone's livelihood as a pledge.

2 - The punishment for kidnapping.

3 - When leprosy breaks out, the priests and Levites must act swiftly and follow everything the Lord has commanded so it does not become a plague thru-out Israel.

4 - Handling a pledge rightly.

5 - The command to pay your workers.

6 - Each is responsible for his own sin.

7 - A command to be compassionate and fair.

8 - Leave some of the harvest behind for the poor to glean.

Q: What is the underlying foundation of these eight rules?

**Moses now turns to Civil Matters by:
Limiting Corporal Punishment, Dealing with Family Matters & Commanding Justice..
This is where we will begin next time.**



Next Time • Lesson #37
“ Miscellaneous Civil Laws ”

