

DEUTERONOMY

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 19 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Once again Moses is instructing the children of Israel on what they were to do, how they were to walk as they entered the Promise Land. So let's just jump right in and begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 19, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

DEUTERONOMY 19**VERSES 1-3**

1. In Deuteronomy 4:41-43 Moses established three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan River. There was Bezer in the plain of Moab for the Reubenites in the south; Ramoth-Gilead in the middle part of the land for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan in the north for the Manasites. And in Joshua 20:7 we see that once they are in the Promise Land and have defeated the enemy they will establish another three cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan River.

2. According to Clarke, he said this regarding the care of the roads to these cities of refuge, "The Jews inform us that the roads to the cities of refuge were made very broad, thirty-two cubits; and even, so that there should be no impediments in the way; and were constantly kept in good repair."

VERSES 4-7

1. We covered the reason for these cities of refuge when we were in Numbers chapter 35. But to sum it up, they were places you could flee to if you accidentally killed someone so that the avenger of blood could not put you to death. If it was premeditated murder, then there was no place of refuge!

VERSES 8-10

1. Once they are in the land, three more cities of refuge will be established, for a total of six cities of refuge. And again, there was three on the east side of the Jordan River and three on the west side of the Jordan River so that no matter where you were in Israel, you were close to one of these cities, you could flee there if you needed to.

VERSES 11-13

1. Again, there was no place of refuge if you premeditated a murder, if you murdered someone in anger and-so-on. Life is sacred to God and if you don't respect it you will be held accountable!

2. Ultimately Jesus is our city of refuge and we dealt with this once again back in Numbers chapter 35. The only difference is that all can come to Jesus, no matter what they have done and find refuge in Him, sparing the person from the avenger of blood!

VERSE 14

1. God does not want people to take advantage of others. You were not to move the stones that set the boundary for your land so that you can increase your land and take away land from someone else. We had to have a surveyor come out to establish our property lines because someone was trying to take advantage in the situation, enlarging their property lines!

VERSES 15-20

1. To convict someone of a sin there had to be at least two witnesses. It could not just be your word against theirs. The matter had to be established. And, if you made a false accusation against another person, then what you tried to falsely accuse them of, you would be punished for! In both cases, punishment is an effective deterrent to crime and false accusations. Today we are weak and inconsistent with our punishment and thus, there is no deterrent to crime!

VERSE 21

1. Some take this to the wrong conclusion. What Moses is saying is that the punishment of the person must be equal to the crime they committed, not more or less!

2. In Matthew 5:38-39 Jesus said, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”** Jesus is speaking of individuals, not a court case. How we are to respond to others. He is not negating what the Old Testament is saying because the courts were not a place for mercy, but for Justice. In regards to this Thompson made these remarks, “Jesus’ criticism of this law (Mt. 5:38f.) arose from its use to regulate conduct between individuals. He did not reject it as a principle of justice which should operate in the courts of the land. For private relationships He proposed the ideal of brotherhood, a strong principle throughout the book of Deuteronomy. To extend the *lex talionis* [the law of retribution or retaliation] to this interpersonal domain was to destroy the law of God.”

Thompson also wrote, “Far from encouraging vengeance it limits vengeance and stands as a guide for a judge as he fixes a penalty suited to the crime. The principle was thus not license or vengeance, but a guarantee of justice.” As Christians, we need to remember that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and we truly are to love people. Yes, there are times we need to respond, but be careful in what you do because you are representing the Lord in a world filled with darkness!

Listen to these words from Jesus in Matthew 5:11-16 as He reminds us, **“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”** May we shine for Him!

DEUTERONOMY 20

VERSE 1

1. Notice that it does not say, “If you go out to battle” but it does say, “When you go out to battle.” They were going to face battles in the Promise Land and God is encouraging them not to look at the strength of the enemy, but look to Him. Do not fear the enemy because the battle belongs to the Lord. And this was not a blind faith, a blind trust for Israel. God wanted them to remember how He brought them out of Egypt to give them faith for the battles that were ahead.

2. In Isaiah 31:1-3 we are told, **“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the Lord! Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, And will not call back His words, But will arise against the house of evildoers, And against the help of those who work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; And their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out His hand, Both he who helps will fall, And he who is helped will fall down; They all will perish together.”** Egypt is a type of the world and we are not to put our trust in the world but in the Lord! In fact, you will not win by trusting in this world but our victory is found in the Lord. Paul reminds us, **“ . . . If God is for us, who can be against us?”** Romans 8:31b.

VERSES 2-4

1. Notice what the priest’s responsibility was, to encourage the soldiers with the Words of God. You see, if they trusted in the Lord, were obedient to Him, they could never lose. But, if they did not trust in the Lord, if they did not obey His commands, they could never win no matter how strong they thought they were!

2. Paul, in Ephesians 6:10-13 tells us, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

You see, not only pastors, but all of us need to encourage each other with God’s Word because it is not “if” we will face these battles, but “when” we face them. And thus, we need to be strong in the Lord, especially in the days we are living in as the battle against our faith continues to grow!

3. As we move into these next several verses, look at what the Lord is doing. He is not increasing the number of soldiers in Israel but He is thinning them out, He is shrinking the army of Israel! Not a great military strategy from a human perspective, but when you see what God is doing, it truly is brilliant and again, the battle belongs to the Lord. May we not forget that!

VERSES 5-9

1. If you had a new home, you didn't have to go to war. If you had a vineyard that was not harvested yet, you didn't have to go to war. If you were newly married, you didn't have to go to war. And if you were fearful, guess what, you didn't have to go to war! I wonder how many were excluded because of these exceptions? God didn't want soldiers who were going to be distracted by various things. He wanted them to be focused upon Him, committed to Him. He didn't want men who feared, but men of faith! And thus, He could do more through a smaller army who was committed to Him than a huge army that wasn't!

2. How does that relate to us as Christians? I believe the focus here is service in the Lord's army, the ministries we are in, the things we are doing for Him. Is your home stable because if it is not, if your care for your family is not there, then how can you care for the family of God? Is the work of your hands thieving or do you have to rely on others to support you because you refuse to work? Is your marriage healthy or are you more concerned about ministry than your spouse? Are you full of faith or full of fear? If you want to be used by God then give your life totally to Him and don't come half-heartedly! Don't become distracted by the things of this world or being distracted because you have this or that to take care of.

VERSES 10-11

1. This was for the land outside of Canaan for the people living within this land were to be destroyed by Israel. But here, if these other cities, if they would surrender, not war against Israel, then they would be subservient to the nation of Israel, they would be spared.

VERSES 12-15

1. God is going to speak of the nations that are to be destroyed, but these cities that could have been spared if they received the offer of peace from Israel, but they rejected it, and thus, they were to be wiped out and the males killed. And the plunder taken would be divided up, kind of wages paid for the warfare.

VERSES 16-18

1. Here, in the land of Canaan they were to destroy the enemy completely, but why? First of all these people were wicked, immoral and they were ripe for the judgment of God. They had passed the point of no return. God was going to judge them for their actions. Also, if they were not completely destroyed then their idolatry, their sin would infect the children of Israel and that is exactly what happened down the road because they did not fully obey the Lord.

VERSES 19-20

1. When you fought against these walled cities you would cut down trees for battering rams and other things. Here God tells them not to destroy those fruit bearing trees because they were to be food for them. That just makes sense to me.
2. For us as Christians, as we do war with the enemy, be careful you don't cut down fruit bearing trees or other Christians who are doing the work of God.

DEUTERONOMY 21VERSES 1-6

1. This was not a death by natural causes but the person was murdered and no one knew who did it. Once the body was found the elders and judges would see what city was closest to this dead body and the elders of that city would offer a sacrifice and the elders would wash their hands over this animal. Why would they do this? Back in Numbers 35:33-34 we see that blood that was shed, murder, if it was not dealt with, would defile the land. Here, since they didn't know who did it, they offered the sacrifice and the elders, by washing their hands over this animal were showing that they were innocent of this man's murder. Pilate tried to do that with Jesus by washing his hands of what was about to take place, but he was guilty of putting Jesus to death.

VERSES 7-9

1. The removal of the guilt was always based upon the blood sacrifice. And folks, the removal of our guilt, our sin is also based upon the blood sacrifice, the shedding of the blood of Jesus. It is as Paul wrote in Romans 3:23-26, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”**

VERSES 10-14

1. Moses is instructing them what to do if they wanted to marry a woman that they had taken captive in one of their battles. First they needed to have this woman shave her head and trim her nails, and I think the idea here is that of purity and humbleness. Next she was to put off her clothes of captivity, which showed she was breaking away from the old life. Next, she was to mourn for her parents for a full month and I believe the idea here is that she had to cut off her past associations, even family, she was starting a new life!

Now, after a full month he could marry her or let her go if he didn't want to marry her. But if he let her go, she could not be sold, she was free. Why would he change his mind? Maybe it was a rash decision on his part and the month's time brought him to his senses. Or, maybe after that month she could not cut herself away from her past and thus, he was not to marry her.

VERSES 15-17

1. First of all God is not condoning polygamy, He is trying to resolve some of the conflicts that arise because of polygamy. God's desire is for a monogamous relationship between one man and one woman. But man's heart is evil and these are the consequences of his actions.

2. Here, if he had two wives and loves one more than the other, if the unloved one has a firstborn son in this family, he is not to be passed over because his mother is unloved. You see, the firstborn was to receive a double portion of the inheritance and God was protecting the rights of the firstborn.

VERSES 18-21

1. Here we see the penalty for a rebellious son and it is death. Now please understand we are not talking about a child or even a teenager but a rebellious adult. And it was not the parent's fault, they tried to train him up, they disciplined him, but now, he is rebellious, a drunkard and-so-on. And his parents would bring him to the elders of the city and they would then decide if he should be put to death or not for his rebellion. It may seem harsh but a rebellious child will not only disobey his parents but will be trouble in a society also. We don't have any record in the Bible that this was ever carried out but it was for them to hear and fear the consequences of their actions!

VERSES 22-23

1. This is not saying that they were hanged but after they were dead they were put on a tree to humiliate his memory and to be a deterrent so others don't go down that path.

2. Paul, in Galatians 3:10-14 expounds on this idea spoken of here in Deuteronomy. He wrote, **“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

All that was due us, He received, Jesus took our sins, our humiliation, that wrath that was due us and in return we received the redemption from the curse of the Law because His blood has made atonement for our sins. He hung on a tree so that we could one day live with Him!

DEUTERONOMY 22**VERSES 1-4**

1. What is God against here? It is the sin of doing nothing. Yes, it may take some of your time to get involved, maybe even some of your resources, but God wants you to help another person who is need, their possessions you find give back to them. Tragically today many just don't want to get involved; they think someone else will do it as this story tells us. We are told:

Kitty Genovese was the young woman who was murdered in a New York residential section while at least 38 neighbors watched from their windows. During the course of the 30-minute assault, no one even telephoned the police. Studies have uncovered some surprising facts about these people. Interviews revealed that they were not totally indifferent, as many had suspected. The main reason nobody did anything was that each person thought someone else would take the initiative to get help.

- Source Unknown.

It is as James tells us, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”** In other words, works don’t save us but they are the fruit that is born out of our faith. Thus, if you don’t have works, that fruit, your faith is death, it is non-existent and are you really saved?

VERSE 5

1. Now some Christian groups will use this verse as proof text showing that women are to wear dresses and not pants because that is dressing up as a man. That is not what this verse is saying. First of all men and woman dressed fairly similar back in those days. The idea here is to dress up in such a way that you deceive people into thinking you are the opposite sex. You make people believe you are a woman when you are a man or a man when you are a woman. So ladies, if you want to wear dresses all the time, that is fine, but it is not a command against you wearing pants, not at all!

VERSES 6-7

1. Some say this relates to being kind to animals, creatures but I am not totally convinced of that. Think about this for a minute, the mother bird just had her un-hatched babies taken away and she is thankful for that, that she is spared! I don't think so. I think the idea here is that if you take both the mother and her eggs then you will take away any chance of this group from reproducing. Thus, by sparing the mother she could go on and reproduce and have young, and in the long run, that would provide for you.

VERSE 8

1. Roof's back then and even today in Israel were functional. You could sit up on the roof and relax; they were flat obviously and not peaked. And God is saying that you need to put up a railing around the roof area to protect people from falling off.

2. For us today, and for our families, our friends, we need to have railings of protection in a sense. Protection in our homes from sin so you don't fall prey to them, so your family does not fall prey to them, so your guests won't fall prey to them. You don't want to push anyone to the edge so they fall off! What are these railings of protection? It is the Word of God that will guide us in all truth!

VERSES 9-12

1. Here we see four laws of separation, that may seem strange but there is a lesson that God is showing us in these laws, as we will see.

2. You are not to sow a vineyard with different kinds of seed. The idea here is not to take the seed of God's Word and mix it with any other seed for it will defile God's Word!

That just makes sense although we see this happening in many churches today!

3. You are not to plow with an ox and a donkey. From a farming perspective, that just makes sense. They would not move together but they would be pulling in different directions you might say. For us, the idea is who we are yoking ourselves with, be it a friend, a girlfriend or boyfriend. If they are not believers, they will pull you away from God, you are moving in different directions. You are unequally yoked! That is not to say you can't talk to unbelievers but they can't be a close friend, one you confide in or seek direction from.

4. You were not to mix wool and linen together not because it is a fashion faux pah! The idea here is that wool was used in work, you would sweat but linen is used in worship, there is no sweat you might say. It is the difference between fleshly driven or Spirit led!

5. And you were to make tassels and place them in the four corners of your robe. Why did God instruct them to put these blue tassels on the four corners of their robes? Blue speaks of heaven and thus, it was to remind them who they belonged to – **GOD!** It reminded them of where they were headed – **HEAVEN!** Thus, it reminded them to live lives that were pleasing to God because they belonged to Him and one day they would be with Him! It was to separate them from the people around them, from the pagan influence that surrounded them!

6. For us as Christians, we too are to be separated from this world and unto the Lord and that can be difficult at times, but that is what God desires of us. We are not to be yoked together with the world. Paul, in II Corinthians 6:14-18 reminds us of this as he wrote, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”**

VERSES 13-21

1. Here we see what was to be done if a man accuses his new wife of not being a virgin when they were married. Obviously this was made apparent on their wedding night when the marriage was consummated. If it was true, it not only disgraced the husband but virginity was highly valued in Israel and thus, a woman who was not a virgin would find it very difficult to get married. Today, I am sorry to say, it seems the exact opposite is true, where finding someone who had not had premarital sex is a rarity, it is not valued like it was in Israel!

2. Now what was this evidence of her virginity? According to Jewish customs, a Jewish woman would be intimate with her husband on a special cloth when they were consummating their marriage. Thus, this evidence was drops of blood left on the cloth and then the cloth was given to the woman's father as evidence that she was a virgin and her husband could never hold this against her. Kalland makes these comments, "The proofs of virginity, the blood-spotted bedclothes or garments, which, though not infallible, were widely accepted in the ancient Near East as indications of prior virginity, are still accepted among some peoples today."

3. If the husband was lying and his new wife was a virgin, as the elders of the city looked at the evidence and made their judgment, he would have to pay 100 shekels of silver to his father-in-law and then he still had to stay married to her and he could never divorce her!

4. But if what he said were true, then they would take her and stone her to death. In Exodus 22:16-17 we are told, "**If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.**" But here she has no concern for her virginity and she willingly disregards it and even tries to hide it from her husband that she is not a virgin!

VERSE 22

1. How was adultery dealt with in Israel? Both parties involved were put to death! Why was God so strict with this? Because of the consequences that resulted from this sin!

Look at our society today and see the devastating affects adultery has upon it!

2. Kerby Anderson had this to say in regards to adultery:

The seventh commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Nevertheless, this sin has been committed throughout history. Today, though, adultery seems more rampant than ever. While tabloid stories report the affairs of politicians, millionaires, and movie stars, films like "The English Patient," "The Prince of Tides," or "The Bridges of Madison County" feature and even promote adultery.

How prevalent is adultery? Two of the most reliable studies come to similar conclusions. The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior estimates that "More than one-third of men and one-quarter of women admit having had at least one extramarital sexual experience." A survey by the National Opinion Research Center (University of Chicago) found lower percentages: 25 percent of men had been unfaithful and 17 percent of women. Even when these lower ratios are applied to the current adult population, that means that some 19 million husbands and 12 million wives have had an affair.

Whatever the actual numbers, the point to be made is that adultery is much more common than we would like to admit. Family therapist and psychiatrist Frank Pittman believes "There may be as many acts of infidelity in our society as there are traffic accidents." He further argues that the fact that adultery has become commonplace has altered society's perception of it. He says, "We won't go back to the times when adulterers were put in the stocks and publicly humiliated, or become one of those societies and there are many in which adultery is punishable by death. Society in any case is unable to enforce a rule that the majority of people break, and infidelity is so common it is no longer deviant."

Perhaps you are thinking, "This is just a problem with non-Christians in society. It can't be a problem in the church. Certainly the moral standards of Christians are higher." Well, there is growing evidence that adultery is also a problem in Christian circles. An article in a 1997 issue of *Newsweek* magazine noted that various surveys suggest that as many as 30 percent of male Protestant ministers have had sexual relationships with women other than their wives.

The Journal of Pastoral Care in 1993 reported a survey of Southern Baptist pastors in which 14 percent acknowledged they had engaged in "sexual behavior inappropriate to a minister." It also reported that 70 percent had counseled at least one woman who had had intercourse with another minister.

A 1988 survey of nearly 1000 Protestant clergy by *Leadership* magazine found that 12 percent admitted to sexual intercourse outside of marriage, and that 23 percent had done something sexually inappropriate with someone other than their spouse. The researchers also interviewed nearly 1000 subscribers to *Christianity Today* who were not pastors. They found the numbers were nearly double: 45 percent indicated having done something sexually inappropriate, and 23 percent having extramarital intercourse.

Adultery is in society and is now in the church.

- Kerby Anderson, Adultery

VERSES 23-29

1. These are laws concerning rape. First, if a man has intimate relations with a virgin who was betrothed to a husband, married but the marriage not consummated yet, and this occurs in the city and she does not cry out, both are stoned to death. Why is that? Because, by not crying out she was saying that she was a willing party in this.
2. But, if she is in the countryside and a man has intimate relations with her, she is not to be stoned to death, only the man. Why is that? Because no one can hear her and it was presumed that she was a victim of rape!
3. And, if a man has intimate relations with a woman who is not betrothed, then he has to pay her father 50 shekels and he has to marry her, and he forfeits his right to divorce her in the future.

VERSE 30

1. This is a law against incest. We saw this in Leviticus chapter 18, God forbid it.
2. As I close this evening let me leave you with these words from the late and great Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee from his Commentary on Deuteronomy. He wrote:

Today people talk about the “new” morality and consider sex apart from marriage a great step forward. God gave a standard of morality to His people, Israel. God-given morality has always been a blessing to any nation. Any nation that has broken over at this point has gone down. When I think of this, and when I think of the condition of my country, I weep. Under God’s law to Israel, a person guilty of adultery was stoned to death, whether man or woman. If we did that here in Southern California, there would be so many rock piles it would be impossible to drive a car through this part of the country.

God honors marriage and God honors sexual purity. Adultery in Israel was to be punished by stoning. This tells us how God feels about adultery, friends. Remember that God’s love for His people is expressed in His Law. This law regarding the protection of the sanctity of marriage is a very fine example of His love and concern for the human family.

- J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Deuteronomy p. 588

May we not forget that and follow as the Lord is leading us, to obey His ways and not ours for there is the blessing for us, in obedience!