

## DEUTERONOMY

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 23 as we continue our study through the Word of God. We are currently in the second of three sermons that Moses gave to the children of Israel as they are preparing to enter the Promise Land under the leadership of Joshua. This sermon began back in Deuteronomy 4:44 and will continue through Deuteronomy 26:19. So with that said, let's begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 23, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word.

### DEUTERONOMY 23

#### VERSE 1

1. First of all, many men became eunuchs to serve pagan deities, and obviously God is against that. But what if it was a birth defect or some kind of accident that made you like this? Would that mean you were cut off from worshiping the Lord? I don't believe that is what Moses is saying here. In Isaiah 56:3-5 we are told, **“Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the Lord Speak, saying, ‘The Lord has utterly separated me from His people’; Nor let the eunuch say, ‘Here I am, a dry tree.’ For thus says the Lord: ‘To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.’”**

Poole, I believe, rightly suggests that the idea of **the assembly of the LORD** is the leadership, or the rulers of Israel. These people were barred not from the religious life of Israel, but from the political life of the nation. Also, Trapp agrees, as he tells us regarding that phrase, **shall not enter the assembly of the LORD**: “Shall not go in and out before the people as a public officer.” And Clarke makes these remarks, “If by entering into the congregation be meant the bearing a *civil* office among the people, such as magistrate, judge, etc., then the reason of the law is very plain.” I think that is how this verse should be viewed in light of what we have read in Isaiah 56.

2. How does this even relate to us as Christians today? I believe the point or the lesson for us today is that God wants us to reproduce, that a healthy church will grow. You see, if it becomes emasculated, if there is no seed in the church, it is dead! Thus, a healthy church will reproduce as they share their faith, the church will grow!

#### VERSE 2

1. We are not completely sure what is meant here. Some feel it is dealing with mixed marriages, a Jew and a pagan or gentile. Others feel it speaks of someone who was born out of an incestuous relationship!

2. For us today I believe it means that you must be born again. In John 1:12-13 we are told, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** You see, God does not have any grandchildren, you are either a son or daughter or you are illegitimate. We have been adopted into the family of God by faith in Christ, that is what makes us legitimate sons and daughters of God!

#### VERSES 3-6

1. Moab and Ammon were two sons of Lot that were born out of an incestuous relationship with his two daughters. (Genesis 19:30-38). And their descendents were pagan; they worshiped Baal besides other false gods. And God is saying that His children are not to let them in because they will infect His children with their poison, with their doctrines of demons! What a great lesson for us to learn, to not get involved with activities that would dishonor God and never let an unsaved person speak from the pulpit!

2. We also see mentioned here Balaam, who was from Mesopotamia, and he was hired by Balak to curse the children of Israel. And I love what God did, He turned those cursings into blessings! It is as we are told in Isaiah 54:17, **“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,’ Says the Lord.”**

You see, no matter what the enemy may throw at us, God will see us through and in the end He will give us the victory! Why does God do that for us? Just as He loves the children of Israel He loves us! Paul's prayer to know God's love goes like this, **“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”** Ephesians 3:17-20. God's love for us is so rich, it is so deep, it is so wide and no one, nothing can separate us from it!

#### VERSES 7-8

1. The Edomites were the descendents of Esau, the brother of Jacob and God tells the children of Israel not to abhor them or detest them. The same with the Egyptians because Israel was truly born as a nation in Egypt, from 70 people to well over 2 million in just around 400 years! Now this may not seem fair for the Ammonites and the Moabites, but keep in mind that there is always the grace and mercy of God extended to those who turn to Him. And don't forget that Ruth was a Moabite!

VERSES 9-14

1. God not only wants His people to be ceremonially clean, but also their out-houses you might say, were to be outside the camp. And when they finished their business they were to cover it up. Keep in mind that the camp of Israel had some 2 to 3 million people and without these sanitation laws it would have been a mess and of course, the spread of disease! And God looks at the camp like this, **“For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.”** Folks, may we keep our lives clean, not put garbage in them for the Spirit of God dwells in us and we are to be a holy people!

VERSES 15-16

1. This must be speaking of a foreign slave, someone from another land because if the slave came from the children of Israel they would have to return them to their owner, their master.

VERSES 17-18

1. Moses is saying that there should be no female prostitutes or male prostitutes or **“perverted one”** in Israel. This was a common practice in the pagan religions, as these female and male prostitutes would give the money they made to their gods. And Moses tells them not to take any of their money, not of a harlot or even a dog, which speaks of a male prostitute. This is an abomination before the Lord!

2. You may not think this relates to us today, but it does. When a church knowingly takes money from ill-gotten gains, it is an abomination before the Lord. Many today are even prostituting the Lord for a profit and that is just sick. When you look at the merchandising of Christianity, it is a multi-billion dollar industry and how much of that money is being used to spread the Gospel message? What an abomination before the Lord!

#### VERSES 19-20

1. It seems that you were not to charge interest on loans made to the poor for their basic needs. In Exodus 22:25 we see this spoken of, “**If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest.**” You could charge interest on loans made not to the poor and to the foreigner, and again I see this as some kind of business transaction.

#### VERSES 21-23

1. Today oaths are given and broken; it seems to be the standard business practice. But God says that if we make any vow to Him we need to keep it. Don't make a vow in haste and when we do make one, have the integrity of fulfilling it or it is a sin!

VERSES 24-25

1. You were not to harvest from your neighbors field but if you were traveling you could pick a few grapes, pluck some heads of grain to eat along the way. Think about it, when you traveled back then you couldn't stop at a mini-mart to get food along the way and thus, God provided a way for them to eat as they traveled. We see this played out in the New Testament as the disciples of Jesus plucked some heads of grain to eat as they traveled!

**DEUTERONOMY 24**VERSES 1-4

1. Here it is, the Law for getting a divorce, but on what grounds? Moses tells us that her husband **“found some uncleanness in her”** and thus, he could then write a certificate of divorce, place this certificate of divorce in her hand and it was a binding, legal document. They key to this is the meaning of **“uncleanness.”**

This debate on the meaning of this word continued in Jesus day and there were two schools of thought. Rabbi Hillel had a very liberal view. He said that uncleanness meant if she burned his breakfast and even to the extreme of him seeing another woman who was “cleaner” than his wife, he could divorce her. Obviously this was a very popular view among the men!

Then there was the more conservative view from Rabbi Shammai. He felt that this uncleanness meant sexual immorality, that she had committed adultery and because of that he could divorce his wife. Who was right in this matter?

In Matthew 19:3-9 Jesus gives us the answer and it may not be what you think. We are told, **“The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?’ And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’ They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”**

The Pharisees thought they had Jesus on this one because of these two schools of thought and whatever side He picked, the other side would be angry with Him and I believe they knew he would be on the conservative side, which was less popular. But Jesus doesn't take sides, He just tells them the truth, He brings them back to the Word of God and not a teacher. He takes them back to the first marriage in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve. And what God has brought together man should not separate. The only reason there is divorce is because of the hardness of man's heart and thus, God makes a provision; sexual immorality is the only instance for divorce!



In fact, in Malachi 2:14-16 listen to how the Lord feels, **“Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.””**

And folks, even with sexual sin, there can be restoration; divorce is not the first option. Now, let me also say this. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin but we have gone to the other extreme where the church divorces at the same rate as those that don't know the Lord and that should not be. I am saddened when I talk with couples that are struggling in their marriage relationships because many times they are not interested in reconciliation, a healing in their marriage, they just want out and they want my blessings and I won't give it to them. I don't believe that divorce is the right option and more importantly, God feels that way. It is the hardness of your heart that has brought you down this path!

“But how can I stay married to that bozo! You don’t know how he treats me! You don’t know what I am going through. God wants me to be happy and I am certainly not happy in this marriage, God knows that!” Let me turn this around a minute. How have you treated God, be honest, and doesn’t He still love you? Of course He does! How many times have you offended God, and again, be honest, and hasn’t He forgiven you? Absolutely He has! And God wants you to love your spouse, forgive your spouse and let there be healing in the marriage but it does begin with you! Yes, it does take two people to make a marriage work but often the finger you are pointing should be pointing back at you. If you do like to point fingers, do it as you are standing in front of a mirror! It does begin with each of us and I am sorry if I have offended any of you, but here we go again. God is not interested in your happiness; He is more concerned about your holiness!

2. Why wouldn’t God allow a husband to remarry his wife after he divorced her? I believe it was because God wanted them to see the seriousness of divorce, that people don’t go and rush into this. Again, we see marriages today as a contract with another person and when things don’t work out that contract is torn up and thrown away! But it is not a contract, it is a covenant before God that you both have made and thus, we all need to remember that!

#### VERSE 5

1. Look at how God honors the marriage relationship here. The husband was to stay at home for a year after he is married, to go to war so that he can please his wife, not himself! Then, after a year at home she is probably ready to get him out of the house!

2. Before we move on, let me say this regarding the key to a blessed marriage – it is *JESUS!* Paul, in Ephesians 5:18-21 tells us, “**And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.**” You see, filled with the Spirit, the love of God flowing from your life, and as you submit your life to God you will submit yourself to your spouse – unconditionally! That is the key. You don’t need the latest book or seminar. You need to surrender!

#### VERSE 6

1. The idea here is not to take one’s livelihood, like a millstone, which was used to grind the grain for their food.

#### VERSE 7

1. I wish we would use this one today. If you kidnapped someone, a child, sold them into slavery, mistreated them, you were put to death! It truly would deter kidnapping and what these people do to these children. I can’t imagine how they will try to explain what they did to these children to God when they stand before Him!

#### VERSES 8-9

1. We have studied this back in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14 but it was to protect the spread of this dreaded disease!

2. Moses also speaks of the rebellion of Miriam and we are told in Numbers chapter 12 how she got Aaron to side with her against Moses. And God struck Miriam with leprosy and yet, God answered the prayer of Moses and He healed her, but she was kept out of the camp for seven days. And thus, if someone like Miriam was quarantined because of this, everyone else who has this disease should also be quarantined!

#### VERSES 10-13

1. If you loaned someone some money and they were to give you a pledge until they could pay you back, you were not to humiliate them. If it was a garment or blanket they gave you, you were to return it by evening so they could keep warm. We see Israel rebuked for not doing this in Amos 2:8.

#### VERSES 14-15

1. You were not to treat those who worked for you unfairly; you were to have a safe working environment. Also, you were to pay them at the end of the day and not hold back their wages that they worked for because God is watching what you are doing. Not all work environments are good but I like the one spoken of in Ruth 2:4, where we are told, **“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, ‘The Lord be with you!’ And they answered him, ‘The Lord bless you!’”** At your work place those are probably not the words that are used, but it should not stop us from blessing others!

VERSE 16

1. You are responsible for your own sin. You can't blame your parents or friends, you made the choice and thus, you are responsible for the consequences you are facing!

VERSES 17-18

1. Why does God want them to remember all He did for them? Because as they looked back and remembered all that God did for them it would make them more compassionate towards others. Look at all God has done for us and we truly don't deserve it and yet, He tells us to go out and do the same to others, bless them!

VERSES 19-22

1. This was God's welfare program you might say. This was for those that were poor, the fatherless, the widow and-so-on. As you went through your fields you could go through once and the rest was left for them to go in and gather. I like this program. We not only see the generosity of the farmer, but also the poor worked for their food, they were productive and they could provide for their families needs with dignity!

**DEUTERONOMY 25****VERSES 1-3**

1. The courts were to issue judgment and here it was forty blows, not more. Thus, the Jews would give 39 so as not to overstep this law and to show some mercy. That was the rule of the courts and that still applies today as the judge issues the judgment for each case. Paul, in Romans 13:1-5 reminds us, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.”**

**VERSE 4**

1. You were not only to treat people humanely but also the animals. You were not to abuse them.

VERSES 5-10

1. This practice was known as the levirate marriage and it was to help continue the name of the dead brother or relative if he had no sons to pass on his name. We see this played out in the book of Ruth as Boaz acts as the kinsmen redeemer and takes Ruth as his wife. Now, if he refuses to do this, the living brother or the nearest relative, then they had this ceremony or ritual you might say that they went through. She would take off his shoe, spit on his face and basically call him a name!

VERSES 11-12

1. There is not much to add to that. The penalty was severe if a woman did that and we will just move on.

VERSES 13-16

1. God wants His people to have integrity, to be honest in their dealings with others.

VERSES 17-19

1. Back in Exodus chapter 17 we see this battle with Amalek as Joshua fought against them and Moses was praying on the mountain and God gave them the victory. And God wants the Amalekites wiped out completely and some 400 years down the road God will instruct king Saul to do this and he does not completely obey and in the end, it cost him his life!

2. The Amalekites are a type of the flesh and the flesh is not to be dressed up, pampered, nurtured, but it is to be crucified! Paul put it like this in Galatians 5:16-18, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”** There is a battle going on between the flesh and the Spirit and if you open the door to the flesh, it will consume your life!

3. One more point here. I don't care how old you are, how many years you have walked with the Lord, what position you have in the church, if you start to relax, if you become a straggler, the enemy will take advantage of you, he will attack you. Look at king David, a man after God's own heart! He was Israel's commander and when it was time to go to war, at the age of 50, David had enough and he sat this one out. And in all that free time he lusted after another woman, had sexual relations with her, got her pregnant and then had her husband killed in battle, one of his own mighty men, to try and cover his sin! Be wise, you are not better than David was and look what happened to him. This battle will continue on until we go home to be with the Lord. It is the only time that the flesh will be done away with!



**DEUTERONOMY 26**VERSES 1-4

1. They will enter the land and when they do, the firstfruits of the land were to be given to the Lord!

VERSES 5-10

1. Looking back over all that God had done for them, how He made them His people, delivered them, and they were just thanking God for all His provisions as they looked back!

VERSE 11

1. How often do you rejoice in the Lord? How often do you thank Him and praise Him for all that He has provided for you? You see, it is easy to forget, become complacent and thus, remember all he has done, is doing and will do in your life, which should cause you to rejoice in the Lord always!

VERSES 12-15

1. Every third year the tithe was not only given to support the Levites, but also those who were in need and we saw this in Numbers 18:21-24.

2. What I want to look at here is how their giving was done. It was done out of a right heart, not forced, not giving grudgingly. Look at how they gave:

- Right giving is done according to God's Word. How often people give for the wrong reasons. God's Word is our guide in how we are to give and we are to do so with a hilarious heart, a joyous heart and if you can't give that way, then don't give: **According to all Your commandments which you have commanded me.**
- Right giving is done within the context of a whole life of obedience, not just because you want to receive something: **I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.**
- **I have not eaten any of it . . . nor have I removed any of it:** Right giving genuinely sets aside what is to be given unto the LORD. You don't keep it for yourself, you don't give the leftovers to the Lord.
- **Nor given any of it for the dead:** Right giving is not done superstitiously; "Putting food in a grave with a dead body was a common Egyptian and Canaanite practice, which is most likely what the Israelites were not to emulate." (Kalland)
- **Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people:** Right giving is done with the expectation of blessing. You don't give to the Lord to be blessed, but you know that as you give to the Lord He will bless and it is not always monetary.

#### VERSE 16

1. As Moses begins to rap up his second sermon to the children of Israel, he tells them not only all that God requires of them, but to keep what God requires of them. To be doers of the Word and not just hearers of the Word!

#### VERSE 17

1. What did Israel proclaim? That the **LORD, YAHWEH** was their God and that they would obey His commands to them, they would walk accordingly!

VERSES 18-19

1. We are also God's special people, not Israel, but we are His people, a holy people, a royal priesthood and thus, we too need to walk accordingly. And thus, Moses concludes his second sermon to the children of Israel. Let me leave you with these words from Peter who reminds us, "**But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**" I Peter 2:9-12. May we not only understand the Words of the Lord but walk in them!