

Deuteronomy 23 - Human Relationships; Love for Neighbors and Families

II. Second sermon: What Israel must do for God (Deut 4:41—26:19)

(3) Exposition of the Decalogue (Deut 12:1—25:19)

(G) Laws arising from the seventh Commandment (Deut 22:5—23:18)

(c) Admission to worship (23:1-8)

(d) Prohibition against nocturnal emissions within the camp (23:9-14)

(e) Protection for a slave seeking refuge (23:15-16)

(f) Prohibition against cultic prostitution (23:17-18)

(H) Laws arising from the eighth Commandment (Deut 23:19—24:7)

(a) No charging interest to fellow Jews (23:19-20)

(b) Making payment on vows (23:21-23)

(c) No stealing another's crops (23:24-25)

Deuteronomy 23

(c) Admission to worship (23:1-8)

1 "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off may enter the assembly of the LORD.

1 "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

1 "No man whose testicles have been crushed or whose penis has been cut off may participate in the assembly of the LORD.

1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

2 No one of illegitimate birth may enter the assembly of the LORD; none of his *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, may enter the assembly of the LORD.

2 No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

2 Furthermore, no one born due to an illicit sexual relationship may participate in the assembly of the LORD, including his descendants to the tenth generation.

2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

- Exclusion of eunuchs. Significant in light of contemporary pagan practices. Not to practice mutilation of the body (14:1).
- In NT times such disabilities no longer enter into consideration even in the external administration of the church (Cf. Is 56:4-5; Acts 8:27-28) [vs. "plucking out the eye," suggested by Jesus, Matt 5:29-30??]

The sacredness of the congregation of the Lord was signified by the exclusion from participation in the official theocratic assembly of those disqualified in various ways. Excluded were the eunuch (v1) and the bastard (v2) together with his descendants—even to his tenth generation (Cf. Pharez (Perez) to Jesse: Ruth 4:18-22).

- 3 No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, may ever enter the assembly of the LORD,
- 3 No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD,
- 3 "No Ammonite or Moabite may participate in the assembly of the LORD, and none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD, to the tenth generation,
- 3** An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

4 because they didn't come to meet you with food and water along the way as you were coming out of Egypt. Instead, they hired Beor's son Balaam from Pethor in Aram-naharaim to curse you.

4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

- The unique sacredness of Israel in their relationship to surrounding nations is uniquely delineated through Moses

- The Moabites and Ammonites—offsprings of incest—though not dispossessed of their land by Israelites (2:9,19), were excluded from participation in the Israelite congregation because of their endeavor to bring a divine curse upon God's chosen people instead of offering them hospitality

- God's love for Israel had been manifested in a peculiar way in turning the intended curse into a blessing when Balaam had been hired by Balak the Moabite king (Cf. Num 22-24; Rev 2:14)

5 Nevertheless, the LORD your God was unwilling to listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you.

5 Nevertheless, the LORD your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you.

5 However, the LORD your God didn't listen to Balaam. The LORD your God turned Balaam's curse into a blessing, because the LORD your God loves you.

5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.

6 You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.

6 You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.

6 Don't seek a peace treaty with them as long as you live.

6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

7 "You shall not loathe an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not loathe an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land.

7 "You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.

7 Don't detest Edomites, since they are related to you. Don't detest Egyptians, either, because you were strangers in their land.

7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.

8 The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

8 The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

8 Their grandchildren may participate in the assembly of the LORD."

8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

(d) Prohibition against nocturnal emissions within the camp (23:9-14)

9 "When you go out as an army against your enemies, you shall be on guard against every evil thing.

9 "When you go out as an army against your enemies, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

9 "When you are encamped for battle against your enemies, be on guard against every form of impropriety.

9 When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

- In the case of the Edomites' and Egyptians' exclusion was again the rule because of their past enmity (Cf. the Egyptian oppression, Ex 1:8ff., and Edomite opposition, Num 20:18ff.), but it was modified (Deut 23:8; cf. Ex 20:5), in the one case, because of ties of Abrahamic kinship (Cf. Gen 36:1ff.) and, in the other, because of hospitality shown to Abraham and Jacob's family when distressed by famine (Gen 12; 42-47)

10 "If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp.

10 "If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp.

10 If someone among you becomes unclean due to nocturnal emissions, he must leave the camp and stay outside.

10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp:

11 But when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp.

11 But it shall be when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp.

11 As evening approaches he must wash himself with water. Then at sunset, he may return to the camp.

11 But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again.

- Hygiene for camp life (v9-14). Cleanliness is critical.

— Even in modern times where this is not done or where the excretions are used for fertilizing produce, the health of the community is endangered

— Holiness was symbolized by physical cleanliness among God's covenant people

12 "You shall also have a place *allocated* outside the camp, so that you may go out there *to relieve yourself*,

12 "You shall also have a place outside the camp and go out there,

12 "Choose a place outside the camp for a latrine.

12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad:

13 and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn and cover up your excrement.

13 and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn to cover up your excrement.

13 Include a spade among your equipment so that when you squat to relieve yourself, you can dig a hole and then cover your excrement.

13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee:

14 Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to save you and to defeat your enemies before you, your camp must be holy; so He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.

14 Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.

14 For the LORD your God is on the move within your camp to deliver you and to hand your enemies over to you. Therefore your camp must be holy so that he will not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you."

14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

(e) Protection for a slave seeking refuge (23:15-16)

15 "You shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you.

15 "You shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you.

15 "Don't hand over a slave who escaped from his master when he runs to you.

15 Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee:

16 He shall live with you in your midst, in the place that he chooses in one of your towns where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him.

16 He shall live with you in your midst, in the place which he shall choose in one of your towns where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him.

16 Let him live among you wherever he chooses in any of your cities that he likes. Don't mistreat him."

16 He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

(f) Prohibition against cultic prostitution (23:17-18)

17 "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.

17 "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.

17 "There are to be no cultic prostitutes among the daughters or the sons of Israel.

17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

18 You shall not bring the earnings of a prostitute or the money for a **dog** into the house of the LORD your God as *payment* for any vowed offering, because both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

18 You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the wages of a dog into the house of the LORD your God for any votive offering, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

18 Don't bring the earnings of a female prostitute nor the income of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God as payment for any vow. Both of these are detestable to the LORD your God."

18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

- Note the equivalence of "whores" and "sodomites."

- Homosexuality: "dog" is term for male prostitute (Cf. Rev 22:15)

— Even the money involved was an "abomination" and abhorrent to God. The body of the giver was more important than any gift that they might bring!

— The Canaanite practices of the misuse of the body in their sacred rites of prostitution and child sacrifice precipitated their destruction

[We sacrifice our babies in the "holy of holies": the mother's womb!]

(H) Laws arising from the eighth Commandment (Deut 23:19—24:7)

(a) No charging interest to fellow Jews (23:19-20)

19 "You are not to charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned on interest.

19 "You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest.

19 "Don't charge interest to your relatives, whether for money, food, or for anything that has been loaned at interest.

19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:

20 You may charge interest to a foreigner, but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are about to enter to possess.

20 You may charge interest to a foreigner, but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are about to enter to possess.

20 You may charge interest to a foreigner, but don't charge interest to your relatives, so the LORD your God may bless you in everything you undertake in the land that you are about to enter and possess.

20 Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

- Improverished Israelites were protected from exploitation at the hands of their richer brethren by the prohibition of interest on loans granted to them (Cf. Ex 22:25; Lev 25:35ff.; Deut 15:1ff)

— Interest might be exacted from foreigners (a stranger, v20), however, because the loans made to them would not be for the relief of destitution but for business capital to be employed by these traveling merchants for profitable enterprise

— Limitations on the nature of pledges are also indicated in Chapter 24 (10-13), etc.

(b) Making payment on vows (23:21-23)

21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly require it of you, and it will be a sin for you.

21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the LORD your God will surely require it of you.

21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, don't delay paying it, because the LORD your God will certainly demand payment from you, and then you will be guilty of sin.

21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

22 However, if you refrain from making vows, it will not be a sin for you.

22 However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you.

22 But if you refrain from making a vow, then you won't be guilty.

22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.

23 You shall be careful and perform what goes out of your lips, since in fact you have vowed a voluntary offering to the LORD your God, whatever you have promised.

23 You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised.

23 Be sure you do whatever you promise, because you have given your word voluntarily to the LORD your God.

23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

- Vows were not mandatory, but once given they were expected to keep them—out of reverence for a God who keeps His promises!

- Nazirite vows (Num 6:1-21). Paul kept his (Acts 18:18; 21:23f)

(c) No stealing another's crops (23:24-25)

24 "When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat grapes until you are satisfied; but you are not to put *any* in your basket.

24 "When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat grapes until you are fully satisfied, but you shall not put any in your basket.

24 "When you enter your countrymen's vineyard, you may eat the grapes to your satisfaction, but don't take any in a basket.

24 When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.

25 "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand, but you are not to use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.

25 "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain.

25 When you enter your countrymen's grain fields, you may pluck the grain with your hand, but don't put a sickle to his standing grain."

25 When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.

- This is not to be confused with the Law of Gleaning