

SESSION #49 (29 March 2011) Deut 23:1-18; Purity of the Assembly, Public Sanitation, Personal Freedom, and Temple Worship

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God’s spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6-4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) <u>sovereign destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1-26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = proper response to Yahweh in heart and soul
5:1-11:32	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the heart</u>
12:1-26:19	Loving Yahweh with <u>all the soul</u> (<i>nephesh</i> =life)
12:1-13:18	Theological unity of Israel’s tribes and its Enforcement (esp 1 st , 2 nd , and by implication the corresponding 9 th , 10 th commandments)
14:1-21	Enforcement of Distinct Cultural Sustenance from Life to Death (a witness consistent with Yahweh’s name, see 3rd commandment)
14:22-16:17	A Distinct Culture of Theocentric Faith in God’s Economic Order (with emphasis upon the 4 th and by implication the corresponding 8 th commandment)
16:18-18:22	A Distinct Culture of Human Authority Under God’s Justice (emphasis upon human authority starting in the home—the 5 th commandment and by implication the 7 th commandment)
19:1-21:23	Protocols for Implementing True “Social Justice” (emphasis upon dealing with deployment of civil authority’s lethal force—6 th commandment)
22:1-23:18	A Distinct Culture of Life-Protecting Boundaries (emphasis upon purity of national life—the context of the 7 th commandment)
22:1-4	Purity of clear ownership
22:5-12	Purity of created distinctions
22:13-30	Purity of the sexual life
	23:1-8 Purity of citizenship
	23:9-14 Purity of public sanitation
	23:15-16 Purity of personal freedom
	23:17-18 Purity of temple worship

- This section deals with [boundaries that protect life] in all its dimensions: personal freedom, personal property, public health, marriage & family and the public testimony to Yahweh as the creator and lord of life.
- It’s related to the [seventh] commandment because the family is the womb of a society and its culture.
- Each boundary is a feature of God’s [created design and plan for history].

Last time: **22:1-30**

22:1-4 *Ownership* → capitalism over socialism; God delegates ownership as part of the first divine institution (responsible labor). Socialism violates the 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th commandments

22:5-12 *Boundary* of:

1. *sexuality* to be respected in cultural customs like clothing styles → homosexuality expresses a hatred for God’s design
2. *man & nature* to be respected in care for un-managed nature’s fruitfulness → nature neither abused nor worshipped

3. *human life* to be guarded from carelessness → criminal law over administrative law emphasizes responsibility
4. *involved in economic production* (seeds-field, work animals-flock, clothing-respect for uniqueness of the priesthood) → the first divine institution mustn't override God's creation design & plan for history
5. *between God's calling & the world* (Israel's clothing styles commemorated her role in God's plan)

22:13-40 *Boundary around sexuality* (value of the woman's role and the responsibility of the male's role) – 6 cases to illustrate these truths

Necessary preliminaries to interpret what's going on with these 6 cases

1. No serious relationship exists without [a contractual] understanding—hence the marriage ceremony **Mal 2:14**; Code of Hammurabi says a marriage is invalid unless there is a written contract; **Deut 24** coming up speaks of a written divorce decree.
2. Divorce is breach of that contract (divorce in the Mosaic law was allowed for a variety of reasons because the society was a mixture of [believers and unbelievers]—it apparently allowed re-marriage)
3. God's contractual relationship with Israel was analogous to marriage (**Hosea** and other prophets, e.g., **Ezk 16:8**).
4. The marriage contract is necessary because of [property] and [progeny]; it involves a family and its associated business—property, education of children, caring for elderly, etc.
 - Promiscuity prior to marriage—rules of evidence > permanent marital responsibility for any man who falsely accused his bride; death to the promiscuous bride.
 - Adultery—rules of evidence > death for both
 - Promiscuous fiancée—rules of evidence > death for both
 - Rape of a fiancée—rules of evidence > death for guy
 - Rape of a virgin—rules of evidence > permanent marital responsibility
 - Incestuous marriage—protecting the ex-wife now dependent economically upon the son

More evidence of God's design that justifies these laws

Sexually-transmitted diseases:

- Many years ago 90% of the blind in our institutions were from gonorrhea; still true in 3rd world—babies born to mothers with gonorrhea get infection into their eyes during passage through the birth canal
- Syphilis infected babies – deformed and/or insane
- Women suffer more than men. S. I. McMillen noted that many years ago, medical professors would tell their students, “Curse the day when a woman walks into your office with pelvic inflammatory disease.”

“A girl who had sexual relations with only one boyfriend thought she was safe. She was terribly shocked when her doctor told her she was infected. A “venereal tracer” revealed: the boy had consorted with only one other girl. This girl had had relations with five other men, who in turn had been with nineteen women, some of them prostitutes. The girl who thought her relationship had been limited to one person had had contact, through him, with at least ninety-two others.” S.I.McMillen, MD, *None of These Diseases*, p43.

Massachusetts, after the “homosexual marriage” law, experienced a budget increase in order to deal with the rise in AIDS and STDs as well as increased domestic violence due to homosexual marriages.

II. PURITY OF CITIZENSHIP 23:1-8

Issue: Israel was chosen to be a physical revelation of Kingdom-of-God truths so there were customs installed that applied to outward appearance and therefore primarily of assembly worship.

23:1 emasculated by crushing or mutilation.

Eunuchs came into existence by job requirements (keepers of the king’s harem) and/or religious requirements (mutilation, cutting)—either way, they were living pictures of an inability to “[reproduce after their kind]”—not carrying the seed forward in history.

Isaiah 56:5 shows, however, that eunuchs will be permitted in the future restoration of Israel because they are believers.

not enter assembly of Yahweh

Excluded from meetings at the Temple—instruction, worship.

<p><u>Caution</u>: some apparently have taken this passage to prohibit mentally and physically handicapped people from participating in the life of the local church. Not true.</p>

23:2 illegitimate birth

A birth outside of legitimate boundaries—via incest, marriage to foreigners, rape, etc. Participants in assembly meetings picture the justified ones in God’s presence. to the 10th generation; cf **23:6** which may imply “forever”

23:3 Ammonite or Moabite

These descendants of Lot by his two daughters (cf. **Gen 19:30–38**) were thereby the products of incest and therefore excluded from the worshiping community.

23:4 did not meet. . .hired Balaam. . .

Abrahamic Contract: **Gen. 12:3** clause

23:5 because Yahweh loves you (Heb: *ahav*)

Election love for Israel to be His “counter-cultural” revelation-carrier in human history.

23:6 not seek shalom

Tribal groups have a “historical tendency” that lasts centuries with spiritual implications concerning **Gen. 12:3** which becomes the basis for entry into the Millennial Kingdom (**Matt. 25:31ff**). However, the book of Ruth shows that individuals who believe can break loose and did in ancient times → into very line of the Messiah!

23:7 Edomite. . .Egyptian

Egyptians hosted Israel 400+ years; Israel was a “ger” inside Egypt and for a great while was welcomed there.

23:8 third generation. . .may enter. . .

Takes 3-4 generations to “test” a family – cf. **Deut 5:8**. Argument here for a longer transition of immigrants to a nation for a consistent citizen allegiance.

III. PURITY OF PUBLIC SANITATION 23: 9-14

Issue: Israel was chosen to be a [physical revelation] of Kingdom-of-God truths so there were customs installed that applied to physical cleanliness as a prerequisite of executing God’s assigned tasks.

Background: **Leviticus 15**.

“Ritual uncleanness = revelation of ethical uncleanness”

Note: the emphasis is on what comes out of the body, not ordinary dirt that gets on the body.

Again, S.I. McMillen:

Cites the Egyptian medical document written about 1552 BC, Papyrus Eber, which would have been known to Moses who was educated as Egyptian royalty. Israelites probably knew of the medical practices in it.

///// SLIDE #6 ///// [Papyrus Eber]

“To prevent the hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black calf which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake. . . .An extra-special hair dressing for the Egyptian Queen Schesch consisted of equal parts of a heel of an Abyssinian greyhound, date blossoms, and asses’ hoofs, boiled in oil. [It] was intended to make the royal hair grow.”

Cf. **Exod 15:26** “*I will put none of these diseases which I have put upon the Egyptians*”

22:9 when the army goes out against your enemies. . .every evil thing

“Public health” customs ordered to create physical pictures of sin as a hindrance to fellowship with God under the most stressful circumstances.

22:10 unclean by a ‘night happening’ . . .outside the camp

Euphemistic expression; could be any nocturnal emission from the body.

Picture of disqualification from God’s army involved in conflict with evil for 24 hours.

22:11 evening. . .wash. . . sun sets. . .come into the camp

Picture of confession and resultant confession.

22:12 place outside the camp. . .(Heb: ‘so one may go outside there’)

Euphemistic expression.

22:13 cover your refuse (Heb: ‘what comes from you’)

vv10,13 emphasis the “evil” is what comes out of the body → picture of fallen flesh producing no good thing.

22:14 walks in the midst of your camp

Basis of victory in Yahweh’s wars is conformity with His holiness. Can’t fight evil while in an evil status.

PRINCIPLE: God’s design of physical creation is supernaturally highlighted under the Mosaic Law so that its features analogous to those of the invisible spiritual realm will be observed and pondered upon.

Raises the issue of “public health”:

Leviticus reveals ritual cleansing across many areas that show an underlying design for public health considerations.

Leprosy (**Lev 13**, esp. v.46)

“Fear of all other diseases taken together can hardly be compared to the terror spread by leprosy. Not even the Black Death in the fourteenth century or the appearance of syphilis toward the end of the fifteenth century produced a similar state of fright. . . .”

George Rosen, Columbia University professor of public health cited by S.I. McMillen.

“Leadership was taken by the church, as the physicians had nothing to offer. The church took as its guiding principle the concept of contagion as embodied in the Old Testament. . . .Once the condition of leprosy had been established, the patient was to be segregated and excluded from the community. Following the precepts laid down in Leviticus the church undertook the task of combating leprosy. . . .it accomplished the first great feat. . . .in methodical eradication of disease.”

IV. PURITY OF PERSONAL FREEDOM 23: 15-16

Principle of “extradition”: foreign master-slave relationship usually protected by international treaties of pagan nations.

23:15 give back to his master

Not addressing Israel slave-master relationship because such relationships were economic payoff arrangements (**Exod 21:2**); a form of bankruptcy.

23:16 dwell in your midst. . .not oppress

No extradition → Israel’s boundaries represent freedom from slavery.

Addressed to civil authorities: this slave can dwell as a foreigner (cf **23:1-8** controlled access to worship) & you are to leave him alone—no special law controlling his life.

(**Exodus 12:49**: “*One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.*”)

V. PURITY OF TEMPLE WORSHIP 23:17-18

Topic here concerns temple worship: no typically pagan temple prostitution, even financial offerings from secular prostitution.

23:17 harlot (Heb: *qedeshah* = sacred prostitute) **perverted one** (*qedesh*)

First issue: boundaries to separate Israelite from pagan religion.

23:18 harlot (Heb: *zonah* = ordinary prostitute) **dog** (Heb: *celev* = dog).

wages. . .from a business or from the prostitutes themselves.

abomination. . .theme of this section 22-23

VI. CONCLUSION

A Distinct Culture of Life-Protecting Boundaries (emphasis upon purity of national life—the context of the 7th commandment): personal freedom, personal property, public health, marriage & family and the public testimony to Yahweh as the creator and lord of life.