Various Laws & Penalties

Deuteronomy 17:14-23:25

Reading Questions

1. What is the inheritance of Lewi?
2. What is the priests' right from the people?
3. What does the Torah command regarding יהושע the Anointed, the only begotten Son of יהוה?
4. What is the penalty for someone speaking in the Name of יהוה something that He did not command them to speak?
5. How do we know when the words of a prophet are not from יהוה?
6. How many cities of refuge were there?
7. Is everyone who kills worthy of death?
8. Why are the cities of refuge so crucial?
9. Who puts the murderer to death and when?
10. What is the penalty for bearing false witness?
11. Who are those that did not go out to battle?
12. Could women be taken in battle?
13. What trees can be cut down during the besieging of a city?
14. What roles do elders fill in society in this reading?
15. When a woman is taken captive to be your wife, where does she live, how many days does she live there, and what does she do?
16. What is the penalty for being a rebellious and wayward son that is a glutton and a drunkard who will not listen to his parents' discipline?
17. What does the phrase, "you are not allowed to hide yourself" mean?
18. What does יהוה think about a man wearing woman's clothes and vice-versa?
19. What is the law for the roof of a house and what can we learn from this?
20. What is the penalty for bringing an evil name on a virgin of Yisra'el?
21. What is the penalty for a woman choosing to not remain a virgin until marriage and what is it called what she has done?
22. Are a man and woman who are betrothed considered husband and wife?
23. If a man seizes a woman who is a maiden and not betrothed and lies with her, is she automatically his wife?
24. Can a Mo'avite enter the Assembly of יהוה?
25. Who can enter the assembly and who can't?
26. What is the law regarding run-away slaves?
27. Who can be lent to with interest?
28. Is it stealing to go into your neighbor's yard or field and eat the food from their trees, vines, or field?

Reading Answers

1. יהוה (Deuteronomy 18:2)

2. The shoulder, the two cheeks, and the stomach (Deuteronomy 18:3), the first fruits of grains, wine, and oil, and the first of the fleece of the sheep (Deuteronomy 18:4). The shoulder, two cheeks, and stomach requirement also apply to the Exodus 12 Passover Lamb or Goat because in Exodus 12:27 that lamb or goat is called a "Zevach" – the same word used in Deuteronomy 18:3. See *reading notes for Week 16 of the Annual Reading Schedule for more information on "laws of the Zevach"*.

3. The Torah teaches that He is also a prophet and that we must listen to Him (Deuteronomy 18:15). The Torah teaches He is like Mosheh, that יהוה's words were in His mouth and that He spoke what יהוה commanded Him (Deuteronomy 18:18). The Torah teaches that יהוה will require us to listen to Him (Deuteronomy 18:19).

4. Death (Deuteronomy 18:20)

5. If that prophet is speaking in the name of יהוה and what they say does not come to pass, then that is the word which יהוה has not spoken (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

6. Six. Although Deuteronomy 19:2 says three cities, we learn from Numbers 35:6-15 that there are actually six – three on one side of the Yarden, and three on the other. Deuteronomy 19:2 and 19:7 are probably speaking of the three cities on the east side of the Yarden because in 19:8-9 it mentions adding three more cities after their borders are enlarged.

7. No. If someone did not hate the other person before and the death was an accident they are not worthy of death (Deuteronomy 19:4-6).

8. Because if the avenger of blood kills the person who is fleeing then innocent blood is shed and blood-guilt is upon the people (Deuteronomy 19:8-10).

9. If there is more than one witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15) and the one who killed someone hated them before and it was intentional, the revenger of blood puts him to death after the elders give the one who murdered into His hand from the city of refuge (Deuteronomy 19:11-12). We also learned in previous readings that before someone is put to death, they must stand before the congregation in right-ruling (Numbers 35:12). From Numbers 35:20-30, additionally, there are guidelines pointing out that there must be at least two witnesses for someone to be put to death. It also states in Numbers 35:19 the revenger of blood himself puts the murderer to death when he meets him. We learn also from Numbers 35:26-28 that

the revenger of blood is not guilty if the one who killed someone is found outside his city of refuge.

10. Whatever penalty you were witnessing of someone else to receive (Deuteronomy 19:16-21).

11. Those who built a new house and have not yet dedicated it, those who planted a vineyard and have not begun to use it, those betrothed to a woman and have not yet taken her, and those who are faint of heart (Deuteronomy 20:5-8).

12. Only from the cities further away from them. All the cities of the land they are inheriting were to be put under the ban (Deuteronomy 20:10-18). In addition, we learned in a previous reading these women would have had to been virgins (Numbers 31:17-18).

13. Trees that do not produce food (Deuteronomy 20:19-20).

14. They deliver the murderer into the hand of the revenger of blood (Deuteronomy 19:11-12). They bring down the heifer for one found slain and wash their hands over its neck which was broke in the wadi (Deuteronomy 21:1-9). These two acts are similar in that they have to do with purging guilt of innocent blood from your midst by doing what is right in the eyes of יהוה (Deuteronomy 21:9). Similar to these also is the elders hearing matters such as parents testifying against their rebellious and wayward son before he is stoned at the gate of the city (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Elders also are witnesses of the proof of a girl's maidenhood when her parents bring it forward and taken part in executing punishment if she was not a maiden (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). These last two are similar in that they have to do with purging evil from their midst.

15. She lives in your house for a moon of days as she mourns her father and mother a moon of days. She shaves her head and trims her nails, and puts aside the mantle of her captivity. (Deuteronomy 21:10-13). As a side note, this is one evidence that the calendar does use the moon for months. The other evidence is in Exodus 2:3.

16. Your parents bring you before the elders at the gate of the city, testify, and the men of the city stone him to death with stones (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

17. This phrase is found in Deuteronomy 22:3. It means don't act like something never happened and ignore what the command of יהוה is. יהוה knows what's going on and He can see our hearts. We need to be aware of this and doing our best to do what is right even when we're alone.

18. It is an abomination (Deuteronomy 22:5).

19. Every house should have a parapet for the roof (Deuteronomy 22:8). My understanding is that the parapet was some type of guard to keep people from

falling because the roofs back then were flat and people went up on their roof and used it as needed. What we learn from this is that we should take safety precautions with things we are responsible for so that we are not guilty if someone is injured in association with that thing we are responsible for. This could apply to various things, but the point is that we should take precautions where it makes sense to do so in order to provide a means to protect people from harm. That way, if something did happen, at least we had put that safety measure in place to help prevent it in the first place and did our part in protecting people from injury.

20. He is fined 100 pieces of silver given to her father and he is restricted from being able to put her away for his entire life (Deuteronomy 22:19).

21. In the situation where she was with a man before marriage and it was hidden but later found out after she married, the penalty is death by stoning (Deuteronomy 22:21). What she has done is called whoring (Deuteronomy 22:21). However, if before marriage she is found with a man for the first time as a virgin, the ruling is that they would be married (with one exception discussed in a question following this one [linked above]).

22. Yes – A man and a woman who are betrothed seem to be considered husband and wife. This is shown by Deuteronomy 22:23-24 as well as Matthew 1:19.

23. No. A woman cannot enter into a betrothal or marriage on her own if her father is still alive. If her father is alive, he must agree to the betrothal or marriage for it to actually take place. This is because according to Exodus 22:16-17 the father legally has a “right of refusal” which he must be permitted to exercise before it can be said that the marriage is finalized. This right of refusal would also apply to the same situation mentioned again in Deuteronomy 22:28-29. The father always has this right. It is an inherent right given to a man by יהוה. The woman in Deuteronomy 22:28-29 only automatically becomes the man’s wife if the father does not exercise his right of refusal when he hears of the matter.

    As a side note: This shows that the physical act of intercourse in and of itself does not create a binding covenant, but there also must be an agreement. The agreement in marriage is between the man who is seeking to be married and the father of the woman. Those two men must come to an agreement. If the father is not alive, then the man and woman must come to an agreement.

    When the father of a maiden who was lain with hears of the situation occurring, he would have to exercise his right of refusal at that time to prevent his daughter from being married to the man who had lain with her. It is only after hearing of the situation and failing to exercise his right of refusal that the marriage could be considered official. Therefore, it cannot be said that the marriage was official simply based upon the act of intercourse alone, otherwise the father of the girl would have no way to prevent the marriage from taking place.

24. No (Deuteronomy 23:3). Some people would then ask, "What about Rut (Ruth)?" In response to that, I would point out that Rut married into the tribe of Yehudah (Ruth 1:1-4). Although perhaps they should not have married Rut to begin with, because they did marry her she became part of the tribe of Yehudah and therefore a Yisra'elite by law. Some studies exist claiming Rut was from the seed of Yisra'el to begin with, but I see too much evidence in the book of Rut to show that she was in fact a foreigner originally from Mo'av (that is, until she married into the tribe of Yehudah). My perspective is that once she got married, she became part of Yehudah by law; hence the right of having a kinsmen redeemer take her as wife when taking the land went into effect as well. This is also known as the "duty of the husband's brother" mentioned in Deuteronomy 25:5. The term "brother" here could mean more than just a literal brother, but another relative.

    What about the divorces in Ezra 9-10 and possible divorces in Nehemiah 13:23-31? Why wouldn't these foreign women, like Rut, then be considered to have married into the tribes of the men? Good question. I would say that they were. However, Ezra 9:1 says, *"The people of Yisra'eyl and the priests and the Lewites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, as to their abominations".* The phrase *"as to their abominations"* shows that these were not only forbidden foreigners, but foreigners doing evil things, most likely living in idolatry and paganism. Also, Ezra 9-10 is unique in that the men swore to divorce in Ezra 10:5 – it says they swore. Once they did swear, they were bound to do what they said. However, now we know that we are to not swear because **יהושע** says to not swear in Matthew 5:34 – so we could never take the same steps that they did.

    Also, the decision at the time of Ezra was before the words of **יהושע** were known, as evidenced by the disciples' surprise in their response in Matthew 19:10. Our understanding of adultery today is very clearly expanded now to be affected by a person's divorce status, which we learn from **יהושע** in Matthew 5:32, 19:9, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:10-12. Before this, adultery was only commonly understood to include a woman who was still currently married – not a woman who had been divorced. If a divorced woman remarried, or if a divorced man remarried, this was **never** considered to be adultery before **יהושע** came. So the words of **יהושע** **do** change everything. We, today, have a fuller understanding of what adultery is in the eyes of **יהוה** than they could have had in the time of Ezra, because we have the words of **יהושע** written down, but they did not. To think that things are "just the same" now – is simply not correct.

    In addition, we have a deeper understanding from the words of **יהושע** of how much **יהוה** is against divorce. They did not know that what Elohiym has joined, man cannot separate – we do know this. The understanding of divorce back then was that people were only viewed as prohibited from divorcing in specific, unique circumstances such as shown in Deuteronomy 22:19 and 22:29. So their view of what was right was limited to only what had been clearly revealed to mankind up

until that time. So they did do what was right – to the best of their understanding with the information they had available at that time.

Regarding comparing the situations in Ezra and possibly Nehemiah to Rut – they are not exactly the same because Rut renounced the foreign elohiym and was essentially grafted into Yisra'el. Did any of the women divorced in Ezra or Nehemiah do this? It mentions abominations in Ezra 9:1 which would imply, no, they did not yet do this. We have no details indicating they did what Rut did, so we might assume maybe they were practicing paganism based on Ezra 9:1.

The men in Ezra wanted to do what was right, and since a bunch of women were wrongly married from forbidden nations and involved with abominations, if they were practicing idolatry and paganism, and since they didn't have the words of **יהושע** to give them the same understanding on marriage, divorce, and adultery as we have today, they did what was understood to be the most righteous course of corrective action at that time. The marriages in Ezra are only comparable to if an entire assembly today, as believers, went out and blatantly disobeyed **יהוה** and married self-proclaimed unbelievers. We should **never**, ever be in a situation where any believer knowingly marries an unbeliever, so we should never be in a situation comparable to the marriages in Ezra 9-10 in today's day and time.

Also, a believer married to an unbeliever when they both married as unbelievers is not comparable to Ezra 9-10 either. Two unbelievers getting married, and one becoming a believer, would be more comparable to if two Mo'avites got married in the Old Testament and one started sacrificing to **יהוה** only – that's not what we see happening in Ezra. So Ezra is not comparable.

Rut said in Ruth 1:16, *"Your people is my people, and your Elohiym is my Elohiym"*.

By her words and actions, she had forsaken her people and their false elohiym and therefore **יהוה** accepted her and she was grafted in. This is how I view this situation at this time. I know there are studies online claiming Rut wasn't really a Mo'avite, but I think she was and once a marriage is started, **יהוה** honors that marriage, even if it shouldn't have been started (unless it's impossible for it to be considered a marriage – like homosexuality can't result in a marriage because marriage can only be between a man and a woman).

If someone enters into a marriage they shouldn't have, that doesn't mean the marriage is entirely invalid. When Rut married an Yisra'elite, although it shouldn't have happened, **it did** – and ***once*** it did, Deuteronomy 25:5 kicked in and became active and applicable to her when her husband died. If the marriage was considered entirely invalid and unrecognized, then Deuteronomy 25:5 couldn't have taken effect at all.

We see a similar situation with something forbidden being required to be honored in Joshua 9 where the Giv'onites tricked the Yisra'eylites into a covenant that was forbidden by יהוה. Although the covenant was forbidden, יהוה required them to honor what they had agreed to.

25. Those with a wounded, crushed, or cut off member, of illegitimate birth, an Ammonite, or a Mo'avite cannot enter. However, the third generation of an Edomite or Mitsrite (Egyptian) can enter.

26. You cannot turn him back in to his Adon (Lord/Boss) (Deuteronomy 23:15-16).

27. A foreigner (Deuteronomy 23:20).

28. No (Deuteronomy 23:24-25). As long as you just eat to your satisfaction and don't attempt to take any extra away with you, it is permissible and not considered stealing. This is a law of mercy for the poor, fatherless, and widow who have nothing and need some way to eat and not starve. This is what יהושע and his disciples were doing in Matthew 12:1, Mark 2:23, and Luke 6:1.

Reading Notes

- יהושע taught to keep the law found in Deuteronomy 19:15 in Matthew 18:16.

- There are three places in the Torah that teach "eye for eye", "tooth for tooth", etc.. Those include:
  1) When a pregnant woman is hit and children come out (Exodus 21:24)
  2) When a blemish is inflicted upon a neighbor (Leviticus 24:20)
  3) When someone bears false witness (Deuteronomy 19:21)

  יהושע was not teaching in Matthew 5:38-39 that there should be no penalties for these things. יהושע was teaching to yield to those who harm us and not seek to harm them back. יהושע was teaching forgiveness to others which then can lead to their repentance. If the person who harmed us has realized what they did wrong and repented, we should forgive them. The law does not completely prohibit forgiveness. However, while we are all given time from יהוה to repent, that doesn't mean there will be no penalties. At some point, there can be penalties if יהוה determines there to be. Also, in a situation where we are living "in the Kingdom" with the proper Yisra'elite judicial system in place, elders, priests, King, etc., there could be times where the law "And let your eye not pardon" (Deuteronomy 19:21) would be in effect in certain situations. In society, if there are never any penalties, nobody would fear and some could feel emboldened to do as they want. Sometimes judgments must be passed speedily (Ecclesiastes 8:11) to deter people from doing evil and send a clear message (i.e. "And let the rest hear and fear, and never again do this evil matter in your midst." – Deuteronomy 19:20).

However, in saying that יהושע was teaching to yield to those who harm us and not seek to harm them back, that doesn't mean we can't defend ourselves in all situations or that we should never physically attack someone. See *the reading notes for Week 27 of the Annual Reading Schedule, specifically the question "What does it mean to "not stand against the blood of your neighbor" as mentioned in Leviticus 19:16?"*. יהושע was teaching we should not harm them back **IN AN ATTEMPT TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT ON THEM**. There is due process in the Torah which must be followed. We can't just go around executing judgment without due process.

- In Deuteronomy 21:22-23 it speaks about hanging the one put to death on a tree and making sure his body is buried the same day, and that he is accursed of Elohiym. This is spoken about in Galatians 3:13.

- In Deuteronomy 22:9 it states to not sow your vineyard with different seeds or the fruit would be "defiled" as most translations put it. However, the word there is not the word "defiled" but in Hebrew is from the word qadash which means "Set-Apart" or possibly "dedicated". I have to do further study to be certain, but at this time I do not believe the word "defiled" is the correct translation. I also need to do further study and think on this more to be able to fully explain what I think this means for us. Perhaps at a later time after studying and considering further, I may choose to update these notes. Young's Literal Translation says "separated" and "separation" or to be "separate" is an aspect of being "set-apart"; however, in this case, it appears to be "separated" in a way that is **not** good.

- A similar command to Deuteronomy 22:9 is found in Leviticus 19:19 to not sow your field with different seeds also. Literally, this seems to be a command related to making sure that we're not planting various kinds of seeds in the same plots/fields/etc. and that each kind of plant has its own separate areas from other kinds of seeds or crops. In efforts to literally observe this command, I and some other believers have come to the conclusion that we should also not be eating genetically engineered/modified foods/organisms (GMOs) if they are introducing foreign genes to the seed before planting it. This is why we look for either 1) USDA organic certification, or 2) A NON-GMO (non-genetically modified) certification or statement on the food label. Nothing labeled organic should (in most situations) be genetically modified, so that's usually a sure way to avoid GMOs (genetically modified organisms). Not everyone shares this perspective, but we do the best we can to keep our consciences clear. See the reading notes for Week 27 and the reading notes for Week 1 of the Annual Reading Schedule for related information.

  There may be forms of GMOs that don't involve adding genes to the seed, but rather simply removing unwanted genes. Although that method of genetic modification doesn't involve introducing foreign genes into the seed and might be permissible, I still tend to think we should avoid GMO food also just because it seems unnatural. Even if it is permissible, I will probably try to avoid any type of GMO.

- In Deuteronomy 22:11 it states to not put on a garment of different kinds, of wool and linen together. A similar command is found in Leviticus 19:19 to not put on a garment woven of two sorts of thread. Three possible views on this are:

  1) Avoid any garment mixing plant and animal threads/fibers together, or
  2) Avoid any garment mixing any two different threads/fibers together, or
  3) Avoid any garment mixing specifically wool and linen only together

  These views result from three ways of viewing Deuteronomy 22:11. Deuteronomy 22:11, which specifically mentions wool and linen, can be viewed either as

  1) Very specifically identifying what is prohibited from Leviticus 19:19, or
  2) Just giving one of many possible examples of what is prohibited in Leviticus 19:19.

  I'm not 100% certain on the correct interpretation, so to be sure I'm not breaking the command I choose to avoid mixing any two threads to the best of my ability. However, my views on the details of this have changed over time.

  For many years I interpreted this to mean to include also to not wear any shirts with 50% cotton and 50% polyester. I also had removed tags in clothing for years, not knowing what the tags were made out of and seeing that tags on cotton shirts did not seem to be made from cotton. However, I now think that it's possible, based on information online, that maybe polyester and certain other synthetic fibers should be treated similar to how metal is treated in this verse:

  Exodus 39:3 And they beat out sheets of gold and cut it into threads, to work it in with the blue and purple and scarlet material, and the fine linen, the work of a skilled workman.

  Here in Exodus 39:3 we see they wove in gold thread, essentially, with linen. I think in the past I was hesitant to trust anyone about anything and didn't want to say polyester is OK or that mixing it with cotton is OK if I am wrong, because I don't want to sin or cause others to sin; but the information I see online indicates that polyester and a few other synthetic fibers are actually probably sourced from oil.

  After thinking about this, I would categorize oil in the same category as metal: it's not a plant, it's not an animal, it's just something out of the ground. Yes oil may have been from an organic material in the past, but I certainly wouldn't categorize it as a plant or animal in its current state. So I think my view is now that polyester is probably OK to use, and even to mix in with other fibers, because all the information I can find indicates it's sourced from oil which I would say makes it in the same category as gold or any other mineral or thing out of the ground.

  We can probably think of polyester as a plastic, basically. When it is heated, it could melt from what I found online, and function different from how plants or animals

would under heat, which is additional evidence it's probably right to categorize polyester and other oil-based synthetic fibers in a different category than plants or animals – like metal is separate and can be mixed in as we see in Exodus 39:3.

I do not see Deuteronomy 22:11 being applied to sandals, only garments, although I do try to make sure I do not have shoes with both plant and animal content. Most of the shoes I wear are 100% man-made or a mixture of man-made materials along with plant materials (i.e. rubber, etc.).

- Many of the commandments in Deuteronomy 22 are related. For example:

  1) No various seeds in vineyard
  2) No mixing of two different animals
  3) No garments of various kinds of thread
  4) Laws related to when a man goes into a woman

  While these laws may appear at first to be unrelated, we can see the purity and set-apartness of יהוה's people. We are not a common people. Remember that in Genesis 1 the light and the darkness were separated. So there is an order to all things. Just as we are not to sow the field with mixed seed, a woman is not supposed to have seed from more than one man in her either. In fact, if you study the various Hebrew words for "whore", "whoredom", "whoring" etc. you will find that in the ancient Hebrew pictographs it shows more depth as to what these words mean because of the letters nun and taw which may be in some of these Hebrew words. The letter nun is a picture of a seed (sperm-like appearance in ancient Hebrew) and the letter taw is the picture of two crossed sticks that can mean "mark" or "covenant". When a man and woman join together as one flesh, that is part of the covenant process – but she should only be doing that process with one man. We are to have pure clean garments of one kind. Everything done according to יהוה's perfect order is done in a way that does not combine things that should not be joined together. Sha'ul (Paulus – Paul) discusses this also in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

  Also, refer to Jeremiah 3:1 which shows that the woman is like the land, which then shows the man is like the seed, which then shows a clear link between these commands related to a man and woman staying pure and not sowing your field with mixed seed.

Related Verses

Moon/Days Related Verses: Exodus 2:3
Different Kinds of Seed & Animals: Leviticus 19:19
Tzitziyot (Tassels) Commandment: Numbers 15:38-39
Laws For War With Cities Far Off: Numbers 31
Laws For Cities of Refuge & Revenger of Blood: Numbers 35:6-34
The Cities of Refuge: Joshua 20:7-9, 1 Chronicles 6:57-59

Father's Right of Refusal: Exodus 22:16-17
Duty of A Husband's Brother: Genesis 38:8, Deuteronomy 25:5-7, Ruth 4:1-13
Only Speak What Commanded: John 12:49-50
Two or Three Witnesses: Matthew 18:15-35
He Became The Curse For Us: Galatians 3:13
Light Separate From Darkness: Genesis 1, 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 2 Corinthians 6:14-17
Plucking Heads of Grain: Matthew 12:1, Mark 2:23, Luke 6:1