

Deuteronomy 23:1-25 (April 9, 2021)

Reflection: Do you think all the purity laws (and the laws dealing with impurity) in the Old Testament are to be adhered to today?

Goal: To have people think about what they are reading when they read through the OT law, and that there are some purity laws that are no longer in effect in the New Covenant and some that still are. There are many things that are considered impure in OT that we probably don't think of someone as impure today; e.g, menstruation, touching a corpse, eating unclean food, etc. In New Covenant, we still hold to some ideas of impurity and purity, such as a strong view of sexual impurity and upholding sexual purity.

How do we know? We really need to reflect on what does it mean for Christ to fulfill the Law (Matthew 5:17-20). Also, to recognize what things were ceremonially, hygienically, and physical impurity is no longer how the New Testament sees impurity. In New Testament, impurity tends to have to do with moral impurity (including sexual impurity) which Christians are told to stay away from.

Leader's notes:

Purity: is a quality of being faultless and uncontaminated. Purity is synonymous with holiness and perfection, and therefore, it is really a quality of God who is pure. (Gotquestions)

Read Deuteronomy 23:1-14

1. Summarize Moses' commands for those who those who cannot enter the assembly of the Lord (v.1-6) and those who can (v.7-8). Why might eunuchs and those born in forbidden unions not be allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord?

i. Summarize Moses' commands for those who those who cannot enter the assembly of the Lord (v.1-6) and those who can (v.7-8)

23 "No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

² "No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD.

³ "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever, ⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and with 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. ⁵ But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you. ⁶ You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.

⁷ "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land. ⁸ Children born to them in the third generation may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Leader's Notes:

Assembly of the Lord: The formal gathering of the Lord's people as a community public worship or festivals. This is not a description of the nation of Israel. There are many passages of inclusive worship of Israel (e.g.,

foreigners in 16:14), however, when they assembled in a formal gathering this was more specific of those in and those out.

Examples of forbidden unions: incestuous acts (Lev 18) and illicit sexual relationship (Deu 22:13-29)

Further issues with Ammonites and Moabites: born from incest Gen 19:30-38

Balaam: Num 22-24 speaks of Balaam's curse. This is why these groups were seen so negatively, because they opposed God and his agenda for Israel.

Edomites: They are your brothers. (Gen 25:19-26)

Egypt: This seems quite striking because of what occurred in Exodus. However, remember some Egyptians left Egypt with Israel (Ex 12:38). These people were part of the national body of Israel and the 3rd generation would be allowed into the assembly assuming they are devoted to Yahweh and keeping His covenant.

ii. Why might eunuchs and those born in forbidden unions not be allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord?

- No direct word on this from Scripture. However, it would seem that when Israel assembled it was to demonstrate something about what the spiritual nature of Israel should be, an unblemished people of God. This demonstration is a physical shadow that pointed to a deeper spiritual reality. We also see this in a number of different areas:
 - o The sacrifice to God are unblemished
 - o Physical circumcision was meant to demonstrate the spiritual circumcision of the heart
- This does not mean that those born in these circumstances could not be true Israelites
 - o Rahab and Ruth are all revered by Israel even though they come from foreign nations
 - o Strong possibly that Daniel was a eunuch

Leader's note

- **Eunuch:** All commentators agree that it covers every situation a person would be considered a eunuch; accidental, intentional, birth defect
- **Shouldn't King David be excluded?:** Many have argued because a person is considered a Jew from the Father's line. For example, Joseph's Egyptian wife did not make their sons Ephraim and Manasseh Egyptian (Gen 41:50-52). Moses' son Gershom was circumcised even though born from Zipporah (a Midianite)
 - o Jewish rabbis will often recognize today that in the Torah, a person's status as a Jew seems to come from his father (unlike today where someone is recognized as a Jew from the mother's side)

2. Should churches hold to these exclusionary views when they assemble to worship?

Empathically no.

1) The church is a body made up of Jew and Gentile now, and no where are there restrictions on makeup of those who assemble before God to worship on Sunday

2) There is restriction however, of those who are hardened in their moral impurity that they are not allowed join the assembly because they have been excommunicated

3. What are Moses' commands when the Israelites encamp an enemy (v.9)? What are the two situations that Moses' speaks on and how are they to be resolved in cleanliness (v.10-13)? What is the rationale of why they shouldn't be impure (v.14)?

⁹ "When you are encamped against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

¹⁰ "If any man among you becomes unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he shall go outside the camp. He shall not come inside the camp, ¹¹ but when evening comes, he shall bathe himself in water, and as the sun sets, he may come inside the camp.

¹² "You shall have a place outside the camp, and you shall go out to it. ¹³ And you shall have a trowel with your tools, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it and turn back and cover up your excrement. ¹⁴ Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

Leader's Notes:

Camp: means military encampment. That just because they were away from Israel, still meant that they were to be pure

Two examples given:

- Lev 15 he had about bodily discharge
- Feces, more about what comes inside the body than repulsive nature of feces
- Rationale: He protects and delivers you enemies to you. This is why u need to be pure. Also if he finds any cause of defilement as he walks about the camp he will abandon them.
- "anything indecent" could also mean corpses, other bodily excretions, unclean animals, so on

4. How does this purity relate to God's people in the New Covenant (1 John 3:6-9)? How has Christ won purity on our behalf (Matt 26:28, Heb 10:19-22)?

i. How does this purity relate to God's people in the New Covenant (Matt 5:8, 2 Tim 2:22, 1 John 3:3)?

Goal: We have been made pure (1 John 3:3), and we should pursue moral purity (Matt 5:8, 2 Tim 2:22) in the New Covenant

ii. How has Christ won purity on our behalf (Matt 26:28, Heb 10:19-22, 2 Cor 5:21)?

Goal: Christ has died for our sin, and made us pure and righteous before God

Purity, cleanliness, and holiness are closely related terms and are important to what marks God's covenant community. The New Covenant has made clean what was unclean in the Old Covenant. For example, with the coming of Christ eunuch and foreigners are welcomed into covenant community (Isaiah 56:1-8), Christ has cleansed lepers (Lev 13:1-3, Matt 8:1-3), made unclean foods clean (Lev 11:1-8, Acts 10:9-15, Rom 14:14, 1 Cor 8:7-8). Therefore, the symbolic ritual purity in the Old Testament has been abolished because of Christ (Heb 9:23). However, the impurity of sin is something that Christians are repeatedly told to fight and be vigilant against (Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, Col 3:5, 1 Thess 4:7).

3. How would you counsel someone who suffers from the guilt of those things seen as ceremonially impure in the Old Testament?

1. They are loved by God (John 3:16, Eph 5:2)
2. All of us are imperfect in so many ways whether spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, Christ has still saved us
3. Now there is no condemnation those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)
4. Body of Christ is made up of all people

Read Deuteronomy 23:15-25

4. What is the law given here about slaves from foreign lands (15-16), and cult prostitution and its wages (v.17-18)? What is the law given about charging interest on loans to fellow Israelites and foreigners (v.19-20)? Taking of Vows (v.21-23)? About the picking of grapes and grains in a neighbour's vineyard (v.24-25)?

¹⁵ "You shall not give up to his master a slave[Ⓜ] who has escaped from his master to you. ¹⁶ He shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place that he shall choose within one of your towns, wherever it suits him. You shall not wrong him.

¹⁷ "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, and none of the sons of Israel shall be a cult prostitute. ¹⁸ You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute or the wages of a dog[Ⓜ] into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

¹⁹ "You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest. ²⁰ You may charge a foreigner interest, but you may not charge your brother interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

²¹ "If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. ²² But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. ²³ You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

²⁴ "If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your bag. ²⁵ If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

Leader's Notes

Slaves: forsee runaway slaves from other nations. Casts their vision beyond their own community to the foreign slaves who might seek refuge within the land of Israel. Israelite may not exploit or possess them but allow them to pick a place they would like to live.

Cult Prostitution: Are abominations to the Lord (Lev 19:29). "Hire dog" is probably a man who gives himself up for prostitution. This money is not impure.

Usury: money may trigger next, and they were to not charge interest on their brother and they could a foreigner. And makes it a matter of true righteousness to offer interest free loans 16:20, so not to profit from someone else's misfortune. Reminds them of God's generosity towards them

Vows: Lev 27, Num 30 :1-1. Vows are made they must be kept . Vows are entirely optional. God holds people accountable for vows they make.

Eating from Neighbour's field: Regarding how to treat one another. To look out for one another's welfare. Must allow casual travelers and the poor in the nature to pick from their trees, and those who take advantage of this must respect rights of owners

5. What are some things we can take away from these passages about how we are to treat and love our neighbours whether they are a servant or fellow believer? How is keeping our vows or promises related to purity or holiness?

i. What are some things we can take away from these passages about how we are to treat and love our neighbours whether they are a servant or fellow believer?

1) to be compassionate and charitable

- Should be a strong consideration of not charging brothers interest if they are in need

- NT calls for generosity towards the poor. (Gal 6:10)
- we think of the passages of Philemon, encouraging Christian slave owners to receive back his fugitive slave. Members of the assembly of God are all equal, if not socially, spiritually, and we should be marked by compassion and charity

2) The church should be a place where those oppressed and burdened can find refuge in community of faith

ii. How is keeping our vows or promises related to purity or holiness?

- Righteousness and keeping vows (Psalm 15:4)
- God is a God of truth and so when we speak we should make good on them to be like him
- However, it is better to not give a vow (Matt 5:33-37)

Leader's note:

- **Should Japheth vowed, and his daughter is killed (Judges 11:29-40)** – The letter is silent about what Japheth should have done as Japheth does not seek other options, but 1) the sacrifice is not one which God would have been pleased by as it, and 2) From Lev 27, there could have been a price he could have paid instead.

Though we are no longer under The Law it doesn't mean that purity doesn't matter anymore. God calls us to strive after purity, firstly through the purification of sin and the imputation of righteousness that comes through Christ and secondly to pursue righteous living in our own lives. Purity is something that matters to God and to his people, and we all should consider how important purity is in our lives and faith.