

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
9-14-22

Deuteronomy 22

Laws To Demonstrate Kindness And Purity – Verses 1-4

¹ If you see your fellow Israelite's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to its owner. ² If they do not live near you or if you do not know who owns it, take it home with you and keep it until they come looking for it. Then give it back. ³ Do the same if you find their donkey or cloak or anything else they have lost. Do not ignore it. ⁴ If you see your fellow Israelite's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its feet.

22:1-4 The Hebrews were to care for and return lost animals or possessions to their rightful owners. The way of the world, by contrast, is "Finders keepers, losers weepers." To go beyond the finders-keepers rule by protecting and returning the property of others keeps us from being envious and greedy.

A Command To Keep Distinction Between The Sexes In Clothing – Verse 5

⁵ A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.

22:5 Anything that pertains to a man: In Old Testament times, men and women wore clothing that was superficially similar — long robes and wrapping garments were common for both sexes. Yet, the specific types of garments and the way in which they were worn made a clear distinction between the sexes, and this command instructs God's people to respect those distinctions.

22:5 Some have taken this command to be the "proof-text" against women wearing pants and some Christian groups command that women wear only dresses. Yet, this is not a command against women wearing a garment that in some ways might be common between men and women; it is a command against dressing in a manner which deliberately blurs the lines between the sexes.

22:5 Nor shall a man put on a woman's garment: This does not prohibit a man from wearing a kilt; yet it clearly prohibits a man dressing like a woman, as is all too common — and all too accepted — in our modern culture. The dramatic rise in cross-dressing, transvestitism, androgynous behavior, and "gender-bender" behavior in our culture is a shocking trampling of this command and will reap a bitter harvest in more perversion and more gender confusion in our culture.

22:5 All who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God: This command to observe the distinction between the sexes is so important, those who fail to observe it are called an abomination to the LORD. This was not only because cross-dressing was a feature of pagan, idolatrous worship in the ancient world, but also because of the terrible cultural price that is paid when it is pretended that there is no difference between men and women.

A Command To Show Kindness To Animals – Verses 6-7

⁶ If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. ⁷ You

may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

22:6 If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way: God simply and plainly commanded kindness to animals. Even a bird's nest was to be given special consideration and care.

22:7 That it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days. If Israel would obey this commandment, they would find blessing and long life, both as individuals and as a nation. What possible connection can there be between showing kindness to bird's nests and eggs and little baby birds and national survival?

First, because obedience to the smallest of God's commands brings blessing. It puts us into a properly submissive relationship to Him, that this always brings blessing to us.

Second, because kindness and gentleness in the small things often (but not always) speaks to our ability to be kind and gentle in weightier matters. If someone is cruel to animals, not only is that sin in itself, but they are also much more likely to be cruel to people. If Israel allowed such cruelty to flourish, it would harm the nation.

Liability And Building Codes – Verse 8

⁸ When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.

22:8 You shall make a parapet for your roof: God commanded that a railing be made for the rooftop, so someone was protected against falling. That you may not bring bloodshed on your house: Failure to build in a safe way would bring guilt (liability) on the owner or builder of the home. They were responsible for the safety of those who would use the home.

Four laws of separation – Verses 9-12

⁹ Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled. ¹⁰ Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. ¹¹ Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together. ¹² Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak you wear.

22:9 You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed: Each of these laws was meant to separate Israel from her pagan neighbors, who would commonly combine unlike things to achieve what was thought to be a "magical" combination.

22:10 You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together: A donkey and an ox, due to differences in strength and size, cannot pull a plow evenly.

22:11 So, in pagan cultures it was common to combine different kinds of seed in a vineyard; or to plow with an ox and a donkey together; or to wear a garment of wool and linen mixed together. When God commands Israel to not do these things, it isn't so much for the sake of the combinations themselves, but so Israel would not imitate the pagan, occult customs of their neighbors.

22:12 You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing: This command was also to distinguish Israel from their pagan neighbors; in this way, an Israelite man was immediately known by the clothes he wore.

Resolving An Accusation Of Marital Deception – Verses 13-21

13 If a man takes a wife and, after sleeping with her, dislikes her **14** and slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, “I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity,” **15** then the young woman’s father and mother shall bring to the town elders at the gate proof that she was a virgin. **16** Her father will say to the elders, “I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, but he dislikes her. **17** Now he has slandered her and said, ‘I did not find your daughter to be a virgin.’ But here is the proof of my daughter’s virginity.” Then her parents shall display the cloth before the elders of the town, **18** and the elders shall take the man and punish him. **19** They shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the young woman’s father, because this man has given an Israelite virgin a bad name. She shall continue to be his wife; he must not divorce her as long as he lives. **20** If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the young woman’s virginity can be found, **21** she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done an outrageous thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father’s house. You must purge the evil from among you.

22:13 Charges her with shameful conduct: The idea is that the man accused his wife of not being a virgin when they were married. Apparently, this was discovered on their wedding night, when they first had intimate relations. It is important to understand that in ancient Israel virginity was valued. It was seen as a great loss to give up one’s virginity before marriage, and if a woman was known to have lost her virginity, it greatly reduced her chances of getting married.

22:15 Then the father and mother... bring out the evidence of the young woman’s virginity... they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city: according to custom, a Jewish woman would first be intimate with her husband upon a special cloth, which would collect the small drops of blood which were accepted as evidence of the young woman’s virginity. This bloodstained cloth would then become the property of the married woman’s parents, who kept it as the evidence of the young woman’s virginity.

22:18-19 The elders of the city shall take that man and punish him: If the parents could produce the evidence, then the man was found to have made false accusation against his wife and it was commanded that a fine to be paid to the father of his bride. Additionally, the man had forfeited his future right to divorce this wife: he cannot divorce her all his days.

22:20-21 But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman: If this were the case, the woman was to be executed by stoning. This was not only for her sexual promiscuity (to play the harlot), but also for her attempt to deceive her husband. This law must be seen in connection with the command in [Exodus 22:16-17](#), which commands that a man who entices a virgin must surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. This law in Deuteronomy is directed against the truly wanton woman, who has given up her virginity, yet not claimed her rights under [Exodus 22:16-17](#). She did not value her virginity at the time she gave it up, yet she wanted to claim the benefits of it by deceiving her husband.

The Penalty For Adultery – Verse 22

22 If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel.

22:22 Both of them shall die: God commanded the death penalty for adultery. This was primarily because of the exceedingly great social consequences of this sin. Therefore, God commanded the ultimate penalty against it. God also specifically instructs: both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman. Adultery was not to be condemned with a double standard; if it was wrong for the woman, it was wrong for the man, and vice-versa.

As a practical matter, this death penalty was rarely carried out, as is the case in most of the situations where capital punishment was commanded. This is because any capital crime required two or three witnesses, and the witnesses had to be so sure of what they saw that they were willing to “cast the first stone” — that is, initiate the execution (Deuteronomy 17:6-7).

22:22 So you shall put away the evil from Israel: Though the death penalty for adultery was carried out rarely, it still had value. It communicated loudly and clearly an ideal that Israel was to live up to, and it made people regard their sin much more seriously. Today, we have done away with this ideal, and people don't care much about adultery — and society suffers greatly as a result.

Laws Concerning Rape – Verses 23-29

23 If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, 24 you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you. 25 But if out in the country a man happens to meet a young woman pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. 26 Do nothing to the woman; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor, 27 for the man found the young woman out in the country, and though the betrothed woman screamed, there was no one to rescue her. 28 If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, 29 he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

22:23 If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband: If a man had intimate relations with a virgin who was betrothed to a husband, and it happened in the city (and no one immediately hears the woman cry out in an attempt to stop the man), then both were to be executed.

The woman was to be executed for disgracing her virginity; the man was to be executed because he humbled his neighbor's wife. Interestingly, the woman was considered the wife of another man, even though she was only betrothed, and was still a virgin, having not yet consummated the marriage.

22:25 But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside: If a man had intimate relations with a virgin who was betrothed, and it happened in the countryside (where no one could hear the woman, even if she should cry out), then only the man was to be executed, because the woman was presumed to be the victim of rape. Significantly, the woman was not blamed for the rape, and it was presumed that she was innocent in this circumstance.

22:28-29 If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed: If a man had intimate relations with a virgin who is not betrothed, then he must pay a fine and was obligated to marry the woman (presumably, if she will have him), and he forfeited his right to divorce her in the future.

A Law Concerning Incest – Verse 30

³⁰ A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonor his father's bed.

22:30 A man shall not take his father's wife: This probably described the case of a son marrying his stepmother after his father had died. This was considered incest, even though there was not a blood relation, because he was considered to have had uncovered his father's bed.

Nor uncover his father's bed: Significantly, this was exactly the same kind of immoral relationship that the Corinthian church accepted, and Paul had to rebuke them about — that a man has his father's wife! (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)