

Day 204 - SUNDAY: July 9th

Deuteronomy 22

Deuteronomy 22:1-30 NKJV

"You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you must not hide yourself. "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again. "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God. "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days. "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it. "You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. "You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together. "You shall make tassels on the four

corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself. "If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin,' then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter was not a virgin," and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days. "But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you. "If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel. "If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you. "But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young

woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her. "If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days. "A man shall not take his father's wife, nor uncover his father's bed.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan for this chapter first begins in the last couple verses of the previous chapter (21): "This section begins with instructions on hanging someone. Notice that the criminal was put to death and then hanged (verse 22). "The guilty person was not hanged by the neck; this form of execution was not practiced in ancient Israel. The hanging was actually the impaling [or tying up] of the corpse for public viewing after death by stoning. Everyone would know that individual had brought guilt on the community. The exposure of the corpse was limited to one day. For that day, it reminded people of God's judgment on the sinner" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 21:22–23). Thus, a criminal so hanged had to be buried before sunset (verses

22–23; compare Joshua 8:29). The hanging on a tree of the condemned person's corpse was considered a "curse" (Deuteronomy 21:23). That is part of why Joseph of Arimathea was anxious to take Jesus from the cross and bury Him before the new day, a Holy Day, began (Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–54; John 19:38–42). Jesus, when being nailed on the cross, became "accursed" for us—He, being innocent of any crime or sin, took away the curse for the violation of the law (that is, the death penalty) that we, through our sinful conduct, had brought upon ourselves (compare Galatians 3:13; Romans 6:23).

Deuteronomy 22:1–4 gives practical examples on how to love our neighbor: If we find something that belongs to our neighbor, we are to return it to him. We are to take care of the found item until it can be returned (verses 1–3). We are also to assist our neighbor when he needs help (verse 4). And we are not to hide ourselves from helping (compare Isaiah 58:6–7). Rather we are to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Deuteronomy 22:5 prohibits cross-dressing. A man is not to wear women's clothes and vice versa, according to the cultural norms of the day. This deals with transvestitism or

with conduct that could even give the appearance that one is engaged in such a practice. The command does not forbid unisex fashions—that is, attire that is culturally acceptable for both men *and* women to wear. It should also be noted here that "in the ancient Middle East, dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex was a magical practice intended to bring harm to people. For example, a transvestite male would predict that the soldiers of another army would be as weak as females" (*Nelson*, note on 22:5). Verses 6–7 are concerned with the preservation of the environment and wildlife—one is not to take the mother bird and the young birds at the same time, but let the mother go free so that she can continue producing offspring, thus perpetuating the species. If the opposite were done, taking the mother and leaving the young, the young would, of course, die, leaving none of the birds alive. Verse 8 is another law showing concern for neighbor. In ancient houses, roofs, which were flat, were often used like other rooms, especially during hot weather. Thus, there was a real danger of someone accidentally stepping or falling off the edge of the roof. Therefore, this law was to protect others by requiring that a house have a parapet or railing around the roof's edge to prevent accidental injury. While

we do not normally put railings around our roofs today unless it is common for people to walk on them, we would certainly do so around a balcony or very high deck. Indeed, the principle here is simply that we try to anticipate dangers in anything we plan or build and do what we can to protect others from those dangers. This law was simply a practical way to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39)—to take reasonable steps to protect others from injury.

Verse 12 repeats the command from Numbers 15:37–41 that tassels be added to the four corners of one's clothing. One source comments: "To understand the significance of the tassel, we must first understand the significance of the hem. The hem of an ancient Near–Eastern garment was not simply a fold sewed to prevent the threads of the cloth from unraveling. The hem of the outer garment or robe made an important social statement. It was usually the most ornate part of the garment. And the more important the individual, the more elaborate and the more ornate was the embroidery on the hem of his or her outer robe. The tassel must be understood as an extension of such a hem.... Thus, the significance of the tassel (as well as the elaborate hem) is this: It was worn by those who counted; it

was the 'I.D.' of nobility. The requirement of a blue cord in the tassels [see Numbers 15:38] lends further support to the notion that the tassels signified nobility because the blue dye used to color the threads was extraordinarily expensive" (Jacob Milgrom, "Of Hems and Tassels," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May–June 1983, pp. 61–62).

This supports the common Jewish understanding: "In ancient times non-Jewish royalty wore fringes on the hems of their clothes to indicate their high position. The Torah instructs all Jews to remember that they are a nation of priests with God as their ruler" (Malka Drucker, *Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, 1982, p. 48). However, the explicitly stated scriptural reason for tassels is found in Numbers 15:39–40: "that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them...and so be holy to the Lord." Perhaps, in reminding the Israelites that they were a royal priesthood, the tassels also reminded them that this responsibility required them to obey Him and remain holy. It may even be that the tassels reminded them that God had taken them from slavery and made them a wealthy, blessed people—and that He would continue to bless them as long as they remained faithful to Him.

Today it is the Holy Spirit that reminds us of God's law (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit was not given, or even promised, to ancient Israel at large, so they needed such physical reminders (compare Deuteronomy 5:29). Under the terms of the New Covenant, those physical reminders should not be necessary, as the law of God is being written on our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:33). It is true that Christ wore tassels (see Matthew 9:20, the word translated "hem" here and "borders" in Deuteronomy 23:5 referring to an ancient hem with tassels as described above), but He lived His human life under Old Testament rules, including its sacrifices and offerings and its physical reminders.

Deuteronomy 22:13–30 discusses laws of sexual morality. If it was discovered that a newly married bride had engaged in sexual immorality or fornication prior to marriage, she was to be stoned (verses 20–21). If the husband's accusation of fornication prior to marriage was proved wrong, the husband had to pay a fine to his wife's family and was not allowed to ever divorce her (verse 19). This was done to protect the wife, as the husband had to continue to provide for her.

When two unmarried people engaged in fornication and were discovered, the perpetrators had to marry each other

(verse 28) unless the father of the girl refused to consent to the marriage. In that case, the man who had enticed the virgin still had to pay "money according to the bride-price of virgins" (Exodus 22:16–17). If two people engaged in adultery, that is, where at least one of them was married to someone else, then both perpetrators were to be stoned (verse 23). The concept of adultery even included a "betrothed," though not yet married, woman, as she was already considered to be the "wife" of the new husband (verses 23–24). Then there was the matter of rape. If a sexual relationship involving a betrothed woman occurred in the city where other people were nearby, but the woman did not cry out for help, this was considered adultery and not rape, since the woman could have been heard if she had cried out, thereby demonstrating her disagreement with the sexual encounter. On the other hand, if a rape of a betrothed woman occurred in the isolation of the countryside, where her cries for help would have been to no avail, then the matter was *declared* a rape and only the rapist had to die (verses 25–27).

Deuteronomy 22:9 forbids sowing a vineyard with different *kinds* of seed. Verse 10 prohibits plowing with an ox and a donkey together. And verse 11 prohibits wearing

garments of different material. Let's examine these three prohibitions in more detail.

The prohibition against wearing certain clothes is actually quite specific. Note that the words "such as" have been added to verse 11. It should actually read, "You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, wool and linen mixed together." That the mixing of wool and linen is really the issue here may also be seen in Leviticus 19:19, which clearly states, "Nor shall a garment of mixed wool and linen come upon you." Wool is an animal product, while linen is a plant product. Such should not be combined, as they produce clothes of lesser quality. Further, the *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary (JFB)* notes that research has determined that wool blended with linen may sometimes increase static electricity to the point of causing heat rashes in hot climates (note on Leviticus 19:19). Thus, with the prohibition being so specific, *synthetic* fabric does not even appear to be an issue here, or fabric that is part synthetic and part wool or that is part synthetic and part linen. It should also be noted that the prohibition is against a particular fabric being an improper *blend*. It apparently does not prohibit wearing wool and linen at the same time or even as different parts of the same garment.

The purpose of the prohibition against sowing different kinds of seed may have been twofold. First, it may have been "directed against an idolatrous practice, viz., that of the ancient Zabians, or fire-worshippers, who sowed different seeds, accompanying the act with magical rites and invocations" (*JFB*, note on Leviticus 19:19). But this law was evidently also given to prevent the intentional or unintentional cross-pollinating of different kinds of plants, as this would produce substandard hybrids. The same commentary notes that "those who have studied the diseases of land and vegetables tell us that the practice of mingling seeds is injurious both to flowers and to grains. 'If the various genera of the natural order Gramineae, which includes the grains and the grasses, should be sown in the same field, and flower at the same time, so that the pollen of the two flowers mix, a spurious seed will be the consequence, called by the farmers chess. It is always inferior and unlike either of the two grains that produced it, in size, flavor, and nutritious principles. Independent of contributing to disease the soil, they never fail to produce the same [result] in animals and men that feed on them'" (note on Leviticus 19:19). For other examples, cucumbers should not be planted near watermelons because they will

cross and produce a perversion. Likewise, the various members of the muskmelon and cantaloupe family should not be planted near pumpkins or certain types of squash, as they will mix. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with planting peas or beans among corn, or planting two pasture grasses together. In that case, there is no problem as each seed continues to reproduce only after its own kind.

With today's scientific knowledge, there is much planned hybridization. However, much of it is controversial because, generally speaking, with most "improvements" or advantages come corresponding disadvantages or weaknesses. Hybrid plants grown for human food have often proven less healthful.

Several reasons have been offered for the prohibition against yoking an ox and a donkey together for plowing. One explanation is that an ox is a clean animal, while a donkey is unclean. Also, it has been shown that the ox cannot tolerate the smell of a donkey, so that both animals don't really work together harmoniously. They pull unequally and, sometimes, even against each other. *The Soncino Commentary* suggests that the "underlying principle is prevention of cruelty, since the ass which is weaker than

the ox would suffer in such a combination." The *JFB Commentary* expresses *all* of these thoughts, stating: "An ox and ass, being of different species and of very different characters, cannot associate comfortably, nor unite cheerfully in drawing a plow or wagon. The ass being much smaller and his step shorter, there would be an unequal and irregular draft. Besides, the ass, from feeding on coarse and poisonous weeds, has a fetid breath, which its yoke-fellow seeks to avoid, not only as poisonous and offensive, but producing leanness, or, if long continued, death; and hence, it has been observed always to hold away its head from the ass and to pull only with one shoulder" (note on Deuteronomy 22:10). All of this certainly serves to illustrate a spiritual principle the apostle Paul brought out in the New Testament. In light of everything that was just pointed out, we can perhaps better understand Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 6:14, where he says, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Indeed, this lesson may be found not only in the rule about plowing, but also the ones concerning seeds and fabrics. For while these precepts have value in the physical realm, they illustrate a spiritual reality: Don't get mixed up with this world." [END]

Verse 15 – Regarding her parents bringing out evidence of their daughter’s virginity, John Gill’s commentary states:
“the sheet she lay in when she first bedded with her husband, in her parents' possession, and kept by them as a witness of her purity, should there ever be any occasion for it: and which were to be brought” [END]