

Second Mosaic Speech: Specific Covenant Stipulations – Part 3 (February 1406 BC)

Deuteronomy 19–22

Cities of Refuge

19:1 “When Yahweh your God has exterminated the nations *concerning whom* Yahweh your God *is* giving to you their land, and you have dispossessed them, and you have settled in their towns and in their houses,

2 you shall set apart three cities for you in the midst of your land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you to take possession of it.

3 You shall prepare the roads for yourselves, and you shall divide the regions of your land into thirds that Yahweh your God gives you as a possession, so that it will be available for any manslayer to flee there.

4 “Now this *is* the case of the manslayer who may flee there and live *there* who has killed his neighbor unintentionally, and he did not hate him previously.

5 For example, when somebody goes with his neighbor into the forest to cut wood, and the iron *head* slips from the handle *of the tool* and strikes his neighbor and he dies, *then* he may flee to one of these cities, and *so* he may live.

6 *He does this* lest the avenger of blood might pursue after the killer, because he is hot with anger and he overtakes him, because it is a long distance *to the city of refuge*, and *so* he kills him, but he did not deserve a death sentence, because he *was* not hating him before.

7 Therefore I *am* commanding you, saying, ‘You shall set apart three cities.’

8 Then if Yahweh your God enlarges your territory *just* as he swore to your ancestors and gives to you all the land that he promised to give to your ancestors,

9 *then* if you diligently observe this entire commandment that I *am* commanding you today by loving Yahweh your God and by going in his ways at all times, then you shall add three more cities for yourselves to these three.

10 *Do this* so that innocent blood will not be shed in the midst of your land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you *as an* inheritance and *thereby* bloodguilt would be on you.

11 But if someone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and rises up against him and murders him, and *the murderer* flees to one of these cities,

12 then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and they shall give him into the hand of the avenger of blood, and he shall be put to death.

13 Your eye shall not take pity on him, and you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that good will be directed toward you.

Private Property Rights

14 “You shall not move the boundary *marker* of your neighbor that former generations set up on your property in the land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you to take possession of it.

Witnesses and the Protection of the Accused

15 The testimony of a single witness may not be used to convict *with respect to* any crime and for any wrongdoing in any offense that a person committed; on the evidence of two witnesses or on the evidence of three witnesses a charge shall be sustained. [[John 8:17](#); [2 Cor 13:1](#); [1 Tim 5:19](#)]

Punishment for Perjury

16 If a malicious witness gets up to accuse anyone to testify against him falsely,

17 then the two men to whom the legal dispute pertains shall stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges who are *in office* in those days.

18 Then judges shall make a thorough inquiry, and *if* it turns out that the witness is a false witness *and* he testified falsely against his brother,

19 then you shall do to him as he meant to do to his brother, and so you shall purge the evil from your midst.

20 And the rest shall hear and shall fear, and they shall not continue to do such a thing again as this evil thing in your midst.

21 You must show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” [[Matt 5:38–42](#)]

The Conduct of War—Introduction

20:1 “If you go out to war against your enemies and you see a horse and a chariot, an army larger than you, you shall not be afraid because of them; for Yahweh your God *is* with you, the one who brought you from the land of Egypt.

2 And then when you approach the battle, then the priest shall come near and speak to the troops.

3 And he shall say to them, ‘Hear, Israel, you are near today to the battle against your enemies; do not lose heart; you shall not be afraid, and you shall not panic, and you shall not be terrified because of them,

4 for Yahweh your God *is* going with you to fight for you against your enemies to help you.’

The Conduct of War—Exemptions from Military Service

5 And the officials shall speak to the troops, saying, ‘Who *is* the man who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go

and return to this house, so that he does not die in battle and another man dedicates it.

6 And who *is* the man that has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed it? Let him go and let him return to his house, so that he does not die in battle and another man enjoys it.

7 And who *is* the man who got engaged to a woman and *has* not married her? Let him go and let him return to his house, so that he does not die in battle and another man marries her.'

8 And the officials shall continue to speak to the troops, and they shall say, 'What man is afraid and disheartened? Let him go, and let him return to his house, and let him not cause the heart of his brothers to melt like his.' [cf. [Judg 7:3](#)]

9 And when the officials have finished speaking to the army troops, then they shall appoint commanders of divisions at the head of the troops.

The Conduct of War—Distant Enemy Cities

10 "When you approach a city to fight against it, you must offer it peace.

11 And then if they accept your terms of peace and they surrender to you, and then all the people inhabiting it shall be forced labor for you, and they shall serve you.

12 But if they do not accept your terms of peace and they want to make war with you, then you shall lay siege against it.

13 And Yahweh your God will give it into your hand, and you shall kill all its males with the edge of *the* sword.

14 Only the women and the little children and the domestic animals and all that shall be in the city, all of its spoil you may loot for yourselves, and you may enjoy the spoil of your enemies that Yahweh your God has given to you.

15 Thus you shall do to all the far cities from you, which *are* not from the cities of these nations located nearby.

The Conduct of War—Local Enemy Cities

16 But from the cities of these peoples that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you as an inheritance, you shall not let anything live that breathes.

17 Rather, you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, *just* as Yahweh your God has commanded you,

18 so that they may not teach you to do like all their detestable things that they do for their gods and *thereby* you sin against Yahweh your God.

The Conduct of War—Proper Siege Practices

19 "If you besiege a town *for* many days to make war against it *in order to* seize it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them, for you may eat from them, and *so* you must not cut them down. Are the trees of the field humans that they should come in siege against you?

20 Only the trees that you know are not fruit trees you may destroy and you may cut down, and you may build siege works against that city that is making war with you until it falls."

Atonement for Unsolved Murder

21:1 "If someone slain is found in the land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you to take possession of it *and is* lying in the field, *and* it is not known who killed him,

2 then your elders and your judges shall go out and shall measure *the distance* to the cities that *are* around the slain one.

3 And then the nearest city to the slain one, the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd that has not been worked with *in the field*, that has not pulled a yoke,

4 and the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a wadi that flows with water all year and *that* has not been plowed and has not been sown; *then* there they shall break the neck of the heifer in the wadi.

5 Then the priests, the descendants of Levi, shall come near, for Yahweh your God has chosen them to bless in the name of Yahweh, and every legal dispute and every *case of* assault will be subject to their ruling.

6 And all of the elders of that city nearest to the slain person shall wash their hands over the heifer *with* the broken neck in the wadi.

7 And they shall declare, and they shall say, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, and our eyes did not see *what was done*.'

8 Forgive your people, Israel, whom you redeemed, Yahweh, and *do* not allow the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel, and let them be forgiven *with regard to* blood.'

9 And *so* you shall purge the innocent blood from your midst, because you must do the right thing in the eyes of Yahweh.

Laws for Marrying a Captive of War

10 "When you go out for battle against your enemies, and Yahweh your God gives them into your hand, and you lead the captives away,

11 and you see among the captives a woman beautiful in appearance, and you become attached to her and you want to take her as *a* wife,

12 then you shall bring her into your household, and she shall shave her head, and she shall trim her nails.

13 And she shall remove the clothing of her captivity from her, and she shall remain in your house, and she shall mourn her father

and her mother a full month, and after this you may have sex with her, and you may marry her, and she may become your wife.
14 And then if you do not take delight in her, then you shall let her go to do whatever she wants, but you shall not treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

Firstborn Rights Protected

15 “If a man has two wives, *and* the one *is* loved and the *other* one *is* disliked and the one loved and the one that is disliked have borne for him sons, if it happens *that* the firstborn son belongs to the one that is disliked,
16 *nevertheless* it will be the case that on the day of bestowing his inheritance upon his sons, he will not be allowed to treat as *the* firstborn son the son of the beloved *wife* in preference to the son of the disliked *wife*, *who is* the firstborn son.
17 But he shall acknowledge the firstborn son of the disliked *wife* by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he *is* the firstfruit of his vigor; to him *is* the legal claim of the birthright.

Dealing With a Rebellious Child

18 “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son *who* does not listen to the voice of his father and to the voice of his mother, and they discipline him, and he does not obey them,
19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him, and they shall bring him out to the elders of his city and to the gate of his town,
20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious; he does not obey us, *and* he is a glutton and a drunkard.’
21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him with stones and let him die; and so you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all of Israel will hear, and they will fear.

Proper Treatment of the Body of Those Hanged for a Capital Crime

22 “And if a man commits a sin punishable by death, and *so* he is put to death and you hang him on a tree,
23 his dead body shall not hang on the tree, but certainly you shall bury him on that day, for cursed by God *is* one that is *being* hung; so you shall not defile your land that Yahweh your God *is* giving to you *as an* inheritance.” [\[Gal 3:13\]](#)

Loving Your Neighbor By Caring for His Property

22:1 “You shall not watch the ox of your neighbor or his sheep or goat straying and ignore them; certainly you shall return them to your neighbor.
2 And if your countryman *is* not near you or you do not know who he is, then you shall bring it to your household, and it shall be with you until your countryman seeks after it, and you shall return it to him.
3 And thus *also* you shall do regarding his donkey, and thus you shall do concerning his garment, and so you shall do with respect to all *of* the lost property of your countryman that is lost from him and you find it; you are not allowed to withhold help.
4 “You shall not see the donkey of your neighbor or his ox fallen on the road and you ignore them; certainly you must help them *get up along* with him.

Gender-distinct Clothing

5 “The apparel of a man shall not be *put* on a woman, and a man shall not wear the clothing of a woman, because everyone who does these things is detestable to Yahweh your God.

Proper Care of Natural Resources

6 “If a bird’s nest is found before you on the road in any tree or on the ground, *and there are* chicks or eggs, and the mother *is* lying down on the chicks or the eggs, you shall not take the mother along with the young;
7 you shall certainly let the mother go, but you may take the young for yourselves; *do this* so that it may go well for you and you may live long in the land.

Loving Your Neighbor By Caring for His Safety

8 “When you build a new house then you shall make a parapet wall for your roof, so that you will not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone should fall from it.

Improper Mixtures

9 “You shall not sow your vineyard *with* differing kinds *of seed*, so that you shall not forfeit the whole harvest, *both* the seed that you sowed and the yield of the vineyard.
10 “You shall not plow with an ox and with a donkey *yoked* together.
11 “You shall not wear woven material *made of* wool and linen *mixed* together.

Tassels

12 “You shall make tassels for yourselves on the four corners of your clothing with which you cover *yourself*. [[Num 15:37–41](#)]

Accusation of Premarital Infidelity

13 “If a man takes a woman and he has sex with her, but *he* then dislikes her,

14 and he accuses her falsely, and he defames her, and he says ‘This woman I took and I lay with her and I discovered that she was not a virgin,’

15 then *in defense* the father of the young woman shall take, along with her mother, and *together* they must bring out the *evidence* of the virginity of the young woman *to display it* to the elders of the city at the city gate.

16 And *then* the father of the young woman shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, but he *now* dislikes her,

17 and now look he has accused her falsely, saying, “I did not find your daughter a virgin,” but here *is evidence* of the virginity of my daughter’; and they shall spread the cloth *out* before the elders of the city.

18 Then the elders of that city shall take the man, and they shall discipline him.

19 Then they shall fine him *a hundred shekels of silver*, and they shall give *them* to the father of the young woman, for he defamed an Israelite young woman, and she shall become his wife; he will not be allowed to divorce her all his days.

20 “But if this charge was true, and the signs of virginity were not found for the young woman,

21 and *then* they shall bring out the young woman to the doorway of the house of her father, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones, and she shall die, because she did a disgraceful thing in Israel by playing the harlot *in* the house of her father, and so you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Adultery

22 “If a man is found lying with a married woman, then they shall both die; both of them, the man who lay with the woman and the woman *also*, so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

23 “If it happens *that* a young woman, a virgin, *is* engaged to a man, *and* a man finds her in the town and lies with her,

24 then you shall bring out both of them to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them with stones so that they shall die, the young woman because she did not cry out in the town, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s wife; and so you shall purge the evil from your midst.

Rape

25 “But if the man finds the young engaged woman in the field and the man overpowers her and he has sex with her, then the man only must die who lay with her.

26 But you shall not do anything to the young woman, *for* there is not *reckoned* against the young woman a sin deserving death; it is similar to when a man rises up against his neighbor and murders him, a fellow human being, *just so is* this case,

27 for he found her in the field, the engaged young woman cried out, but there was no rescuer to help her.

28 “If a man finds a young woman, a virgin *who* is not engaged, and he seizes her and he has sex with her and they are caught,

29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall become his wife because he violated her, and he is not allowed to divorce her during his lifetime.

Marrying Your Father’s Wife Prohibited

30 A man may not take the wife of his father, and so he may not dishonor his father.

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