

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

Deuteronomy 19–22

### Cities of Refuge

19:1 When the LORD your God destroys the nations whose land he is about to give you and you dispossess them and settle in their cities and houses,  
 2 you must set apart for yourselves three cities in the middle of your land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession.  
 3 You shall build a roadway and divide into thirds the whole extent of your land that the LORD your God is providing as your inheritance; anyone who kills another person should flee to the closest of these cities.  
 4 Now this is the law pertaining to one who flees there in order to live, if he has accidentally killed another without hating him at the time of the accident.  
 5 Suppose he goes with someone else to the forest to cut wood and when he raises the ax to cut the tree, the ax head flies loose from the handle and strikes his fellow worker so hard that he dies. The person responsible may then flee to one of these cities to save himself.  
 6 Otherwise the blood avenger will chase after the killer in the heat of his anger, eventually overtake him, and kill him, though this is not a capital case since he did not hate him at the time of the accident.  
 7 Therefore, I am commanding you to set apart for yourselves three cities.  
 8 If the LORD your God enlarges your borders as he promised your ancestors and gives you all the land he pledged to them,  
 9 and then you are careful to observe all these commandments I am giving you today (namely, to love the LORD your God and to always walk in his ways), then you must add three more cities to these three.  
 10 You must not shed innocent blood in your land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, for that would make you guilty.  
 11 However, suppose a person hates someone else and stalks him, attacks him, kills him, and then flees to one of these cities.  
 12 The elders of his own city must send for him and remove him from there to deliver him over to the blood avenger to die.  
 13 You must not pity him, but purge out the blood of the innocent from Israel, so that it may go well with you.

### Private Property Rights

14 You must not encroach on your neighbor's property, which will have been defined in the inheritance you will obtain in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

### Witnesses and the Protection of the Accused

15 A single witness may not testify against another person for any trespass or sin that he commits. A matter may be legally established only on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [[John 8:17](#); [2 Cor 13:1](#); [1 Tim 5:19](#)]

### Punishment for Perjury

16 If a false witness testifies against another person and accuses him of a crime,  
 17 then both parties to the controversy must stand before the LORD, that is, before the priests and judges who will be in office in those days.  
 18 The judges will thoroughly investigate the matter, and if the witness should prove to be false and to have given false testimony against the accused,  
 19 you must do to him what he had intended to do to the accused. In this way you will purge evil from among you.  
 20 The rest of the people will hear and become afraid to keep doing such evil among you.  
 21 You must not show pity; the principle will be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot. [[Matt 5:38–42](#)]

### The Conduct of War—Introduction

20:1 When you go to war against your enemies and see chariotry and troops who outnumber you, do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, is with you.  
 2 As you move forward for battle, the priest will approach and say to the soldiers,  
 3 "Listen, Israel! Today you are moving forward to do battle with your enemies. Do not be fainthearted. Do not fear and tremble or be terrified because of them,  
 4 for the LORD your God goes with you to fight on your behalf against your enemies to give you victory."

### The Conduct of War—Exemptions from Military Service

5 Moreover, the officers are to say to the troops, "Who among you has built a new house and not dedicated it? He may go home, lest he die in battle and someone else dedicate it.  
 6 Or who among you has planted a vineyard and not benefited from it? He may go home, lest he die in battle and someone else benefit from it.  
 7 Or who among you has become engaged to a woman but has not married her? He may go home, lest he die in battle and someone

else marry her.”

8 In addition, the officers are to say to the troops, “Who among you is afraid and fainthearted? He may go home so that he will not make his fellow soldier’s heart as fearful as his own.” [cf. [Judg 7:3](#)]

9 Then, when the officers have finished speaking, they must appoint unit commanders to lead the troops.

#### **The Conduct of War—Distant Enemy Cities**

10 When you approach a city to wage war against it, offer it terms of peace.

11 If it accepts your terms and submits to you, all the people found in it will become your slaves.

12 If it does not accept terms of peace but makes war with you, then you are to lay siege to it.

13 The LORD your God will deliver it over to you and you must kill every single male by the sword.

14 However, the women, little children, cattle, and anything else in the city—all its plunder—you may take for yourselves as spoil. You may take from your enemies the plunder that the LORD your God has given you.

15 This is how you are to deal with all those cities located far from you, those that do not belong to these nearby nations.

#### **The Conduct of War—Local Enemy Cities**

16 As for the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is going to give you as an inheritance, you must not allow a single living thing to survive.

17 Instead you must utterly annihilate them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—just as the LORD your God has commanded you,

18 so that they cannot teach you all the abhorrent ways they worship their gods, causing you to sin against the LORD your God.

#### **The Conduct of War—Proper Siege Practices**

19 If you besiege a city for a long time while attempting to capture it, you must not chop down its trees, for you may eat fruit from them and should not cut them down. A tree in the field is not human that you should besiege it!

20 However, you may chop down any tree you know is not suitable for food, and you may use it to build siege works against the city that is making war with you until that city falls.

#### **Atonement for Unsolved Murder**

21:1 If a homicide victim should be found lying in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you, and no one knows who killed him,

2 your elders and judges must go out and measure how far it is to the cities in the vicinity of the corpse.

3 Then the elders of the city nearest to the corpse must take from the herd a heifer that has not been worked—that has never pulled with the yoke—

4 and bring the heifer down to a wadi with flowing water, to a valley that is neither plowed nor sown. There at the wadi they are to break the heifer’s neck.

5 Then the Levitical priests will approach (for the LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in his name, and to decide every judicial verdict)

6 and all the elders of that city nearest the corpse must wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley.

7 Then they must proclaim, “Our hands have not spilled this blood, nor have we witnessed the crime.

8 Do not blame your people Israel whom you redeemed, O LORD, and do not hold them accountable for the bloodshed of an innocent person.” Then atonement will be made for the bloodshed.

9 In this manner you will purge out the guilt of innocent blood from among you, for you must do what is right before the LORD.

#### **Laws for Marrying a Captive of War**

10 When you go out to do battle with your enemies and the LORD your God allows you to prevail and you take prisoners,

11 if you should see among them an attractive woman whom you wish to take as a wife,

12 you may bring her back to your house. She must shave her head, trim her nails,

13 discard the clothing she was wearing when captured, and stay in your house, lamenting for her father and mother for a full month. After that you may have sexual relations with her and become her husband and she your wife.

14 If you are not pleased with her, then you must let her go where she pleases. You cannot in any case sell her; you must not take advantage of her, since you have already humiliated her.

#### **Firstborn Rights Protected**

15 Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the other, and they both bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife.

16 In the day he divides his inheritance he must not appoint as firstborn the son of the favorite wife in place of the other wife’s son who is actually the firstborn.

17 Rather, he must acknowledge the son of the less loved wife as firstborn and give him the double portion of all he has, for that son

is the beginning of his father's procreative power—to him should go the right of the firstborn.

### **Dealing With a Rebellious Child**

18 If a person has a stubborn, rebellious son who pays no attention to his father or mother, and they discipline him to no avail, 19 his father and mother must seize him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his city.

20 They must declare to the elders of his city, "Our son is stubborn and rebellious and pays no attention to what we say—he is a glutton and drunkard."

21 Then all the men of his city must stone him to death. In this way you will purge out wickedness from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.

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

22 If a person commits a sin punishable by death and is executed, and you hang the corpse on a tree,

23 his body must not remain all night on the tree; instead you must make certain you bury him that same day, for the one who is left exposed on a tree is cursed by God. You must not defile your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. [[Gal 3:13](#)]

### **Loving Your Neighbor By Caring for His Property**

22:1 When you see your neighbor's ox or sheep going astray, do not ignore it; you must return it without fail to your neighbor.

2 If the owner does not live near you or you do not know who the owner is, then you must corral the animal at your house and let it stay with you until the owner looks for it; then you must return it to him.

3 You shall do the same to his donkey, his clothes, or anything else your neighbor has lost and you have found; you must not refuse to get involved.

4 When you see your neighbor's donkey or ox fallen along the road, do not ignore it; instead, you must be sure to help him get the animal on its feet again.

### **Gender-distinct Clothing**

5 A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor should a man dress up in women's clothing, for anyone who does this is offensive to the LORD your God.

### **Proper Care of Natural Resources**

6 If you happen to notice a bird's nest along the road, whether in a tree or on the ground, and there are chicks or eggs with the mother bird sitting on them, you must not take the mother from the young.

7 You must be sure to let the mother go, but you may take the young for yourself. Do this so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

### **Loving Your Neighbor By Caring for His Safety**

8 If you build a new house, you must construct a guard rail around your roof to avoid being culpable in the event someone should fall from it.

### **Improper Mixtures**

9 You must not plant your vineyard with two kinds of seed; otherwise the entire yield, both of the seed you plant and the produce of the vineyard, will be defiled.

10 You must not plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together.

11 You must not wear clothing made with wool and linen meshed together.

### **Tassels**

12 You shall make yourselves tassels for the four corners of the clothing you wear. [[Num 15:37–41](#)]

### **Accusation of Premarital Infidelity**

13 Suppose a man marries a woman, has sexual relations with her, and then rejects her,

14 accusing her of impropriety and defaming her reputation by saying, "I married this woman but when I had sexual relations with her I discovered she was not a virgin!"

15 Then the father and mother of the young woman must produce the evidence of virginity for the elders of the city at the gate.

16 The young woman's father must say to the elders, "I gave my daughter to this man and he has rejected her.

17 Moreover, he has raised accusations of impropriety by saying, 'I discovered your daughter was not a virgin,' but this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity!" The cloth must then be spread out before the city's elders.

18 The elders of that city must then seize the man and punish him.

19 They will fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the young woman's father, for the man who made the

accusation ruined the reputation of an Israelite virgin. She will then become his wife and he may never divorce her as long as he lives.

20 But if the accusation is true and the young woman was not a virgin,

21 the men of her city must bring the young woman to the door of her father's house and stone her to death, for she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by behaving like a prostitute while living in her father's house. In this way you will purge evil from among you.

#### **Adultery**

22 If a man is caught having sexual relations with a married woman both the man who had relations with the woman and the woman herself must die; in this way you will purge evil from Israel.

23 If a virgin is engaged to a man and another man meets her in the city and has sexual relations with her,

24 you must bring the two of them to the gate of that city and stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry out though in the city and the man because he violated his neighbor's fiancée; in this way you will purge evil from among you.

#### **Rape**

25 But if the man came across the engaged woman in the field and overpowered her and raped her, then only the rapist must die.

26 You must not do anything to the young woman—she has done nothing deserving of death. This case is the same as when someone attacks another person and murders him,

27 for the man met her in the field and the engaged woman cried out, but there was no one to rescue her.

28 Suppose a man comes across a virgin who is not engaged and overpowers and rapes her and they are discovered.

29 The man who has raped her must pay her father fifty shekels of silver and she must become his wife because he has violated her; he may never divorce her as long as he lives.

#### **Marrying Your Father's Wife Prohibited**

30 A man may not marry his father's former wife and in this way dishonor his father.

*Scripture quoted by permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved. This material is available in its entirety as a free download or online web use at <http://netbible.org/>.*