

Handout: Deuteronomy Lesson 11

And you shall not pollute the land which you are in, for blood pollutes the land. And no ransom is to be taken for the land for blood which is shed in it, except for the blood of him who sheds it. And you shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I, YHWH, dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel.
Numbers 35:33-34 (*The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-English*, page 453).

The ritual for removing bloodguilt in 21:1-9 involves the elders of the town nearest the body of the murdered person taking on the responsibility of addressing the pollution of innocent blood spilled upon the land:

1. Elders and judges of Israel determine which town is nearest to the body of the victim (21:2)
2. The elders of that town provide a young heifer for sacrifice (21:3)
3. Killing the heifer near a free-running stream by the elders of the nearest town (21:4)
4. In the presence of the priests, the elders wash their hands over the heifer (21:5-6)
5. They make a declaration of their innocence (21:7)
6. They pray for absolution (21:8)
7. Absolution is granted by the priests (21:5; Lev 4:20)

The previous series of laws dealt with public officials and the nation as a whole. The series of laws in Dt 21:10-25:19 are concerned with the domestic lives of individuals. Deuteronomy 21:10-23 address five laws:

1. The procedure for Israelite men taking captive women as wives (Dt 21:10-13).
2. The rights of captured women married to Israelites (Dt 21:14).
3. The birthrights of first born sons (Dt 21:15-17).
4. The penalty for a son's rebellion against his parents (Dt 21:18-21).
5. The curse of being hung on a tree (Dt 22-23).

Deuteronomy 22:1-12 = Series of ten laws associated with daily domestic life.

Deuteronomy 22:13-21 = Accusations against the Purity of a Virgin of Israel

Deuteronomy 22:22-23:1/22:30 = Five cases of either adultery, fornication, or rape

1. Adultery with another man's wife (Dt 22:22).
2. Consensual sex with a betrothed virgin in a town (Dt 22:23-24).
3. Rape of a betrothed virgin in the open country (Dt 22:25-27).
4. Rape of a virgin who is not betrothed (Dt 22:28-29).
5. Adultery with a step-mother (23:1/22:30).

Deuteronomy 23:2-15 = laws concerning those indelible to participate in Israel's national assemblies and ritual laws of purity and hygiene in Israel's camp of war.

Deuteronomy 23:16-26/23:15-25 = Series of five laws addressing:

1. Sanctuary for escaped slaves
2. Ritual prostitution
3. Usury
4. Vows
5. Eating from a neighbor's fields