

Parashah 49

Ki Tetze

פִּי תֵצֵא

“When you go out”

Deuteronomy 21:10 – 25:19

Torah Together



In this *Torah* portion, Moses addresses a wide-ranging list of God's commands, some of which are difficult for us to understand. However, you can sense Moses' heart as he seems to be saying, “. . . and don't forget about this and don't forget about that.”

1. Marrying a Captive Woman - 21:10-14

Why do you think God allowed an Israelite man to marry a foreign wife in this case? What must the woman do before becoming his wife? How was she to be treated?

Note that because of **Deuteronomy 20:10-15**, a foreign wife would not be a Canaanite woman but a woman from a neighboring city or nation. Such a woman may also have lost her husband or her father in battle.

2. The Right of the Firstborn - 21:15 - 17

a) What did the firstborn son receive that his brothers did not? When a man had two wives, was he allowed to give this privilege to a son other than the firstborn?

b) How would this command apply to Jacob and his two wives, Leah and Rachel? Which of Jacob's sons received the right of the firstborn?

Scripture Link:
Genesis 48:1–6 may help explain which of Jacob's sons received the right of the firstborn. Did Jacob follow this command?

There is no indication in scripture that this law was ever used. One can imagine that the situation would have to be very serious for both a mother and a father to agree to take it to the elders of the city.

Scripture Link:
In **Galatians 3:13**, Paul explains that when *Yeshua* was crucified (hung on a tree) he was indeed cursed in that he took upon himself the punishment (curse) for our sin.

It is difficult to understand why this command is important to God. If nothing else, it shows his compassion.

God wants us to know that we bear some responsibility for the safety and well-being of others.

3. A Rebellious Son - 21:18-21

In the case of a son who was stubborn and rebellious, not obeying his parents, who brought him before the elders of the city? What was done about the situation? Can you imagine any circumstances that might lead to this outcome?

4. Various Laws - 21:22 - 22:12

a) What was to be done with the body of a person executed by hanging on a tree? Why do you think this was required? Do you see any parallels with *Yeshua's* execution?

b) What is your responsibility when you find something of value lost by another or you come across someone in need of help? Is this common today?

c) How does God view cross-dressing? What reasons might He have for this?

d) What is to be done when one finds a mother bird on her nest with eggs or young birds? What reasons do you think God might have for this rule?

e) Why do you think God cares if you build a parapet around the roof of your house? What general principle can you learn from this?

f) What do you think God is trying to teach us with rules about not mixing dissimilar things, like seeds, fabric, or draft animals?

5. Marriage Violations - 22:13-30

a) Why might a husband slander his (new) wife, according to verse 13? What was the procedure to be followed when this occurred? What happened if the husband's accusations were false? What if they were true? How do you feel about this?

b) What was the punishment when a man slept with a woman who was betrothed to another? Why did it matter whether this occurred in a town or in the country?

c) What was the punishment if a man raped or seduced a virgin who was not betrothed?

6. Exclusion from the Assembly - 23:1-8

a) Why do you think God excluded those who had been emasculated from His assembly?

b) What do you think is meant by the term "forbidden marriage" in verse 2 and why were the offspring of such marriages excluded from the assembly?

See the first question in the "**Digging Deeper**" section for a discussion of how this law might have applied in the case of Joseph and Mary, the mother of *Yeshua*.

Scripture Link:

See **Numbers 22-25** tell the story of how Moabites used Balaam to try to curse the Israelites.

c) For what reasons were Ammonites and Moabites excluded from the assembly? By contrast, when were Edomites or Egyptians allowed into the assembly?

7. Uncleaness in the Camp - 23:9-14

God was concerned that the Israelite camp remain pure. What were some of the practices that God decreed to make sure the camp remained clean?

8. Miscellaneous Laws - 23:15-25

a) As an Israelite, if a slave seeks refuge with you, what are your responsibilities? Does this seem consistent with God's character?

b) In what cases was an Israelite allowed to charge interest?

c) How does God view a vow made to Him? Should vows be very commonplace?

d) Was it allowable to pick fruit from a neighbor's field? What were the restrictions? Does this seem fair to you? Does it seem compassionate?

9. Miscellaneous Laws (continued) - 24:1-22

a) What restriction was placed on a woman twice divorced?

If nothing else, these varied commands give us a sense of God's attention to detail. They also emphasize how seriously God views our words and our actions. God expects us to be compassionate to those less fortunate than us and to take an active part in the welfare of others.

b) How does God view kidnapping? Does this seem harsh to you?

c) When making a loan to a neighbor, what was to be done with his security or pledge? How are the poor or less fortunate to be treated? What was done at harvest time?

10. Miscellaneous Laws (continued) - 25:1-19

a) Why do you think there was a limit placed on the number of lashes a guilty man should receive?

b) A man's responsibility toward his brother's widow is known as the Law of Levirate Marriage. Describe how this law worked. Can you see the reason for this law?

c) How does God feel about dishonest weights and measures?

"For YHWH your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly."

Deuteronomy 25:16

d) What were the Israelites to do to the Amalekites after they entered the land of *Israel*?

Scripture Link:

The book of **Ruth** contains several examples of situations covered by these verses, particularly the Law of Levirate Marriage. What others can you find?

Scripture Link:

Exodus 17:8-16 tell the story of the Amalekite attack on the Israelites as they left Egypt. Although it is clear that God desired that the Amalekites be completely destroyed, history shows that this was not carried out, at least until the time of King David.

Digging deeper

1. Read Matthew 1:18-21. Given the commandments concerning marriage violations in Deuteronomy 22:13-29, what were Joseph's options when he discovered Mary was pregnant? What would have been Mary's fate?

It is often instructive to remember that when God met with the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai (**Exodus 19-20**), in a very real sense, He "married" the Israelites. Based on this understanding, whenever the Israelites engaged in idolatry, God viewed it as adultery. This can give you some interesting insight to the way God feels about his "marriage" to Israel.

2. Read Matthew 19:3-12. In this passage, the Pharisees are asking for *Yeshua's* interpretation of the text in Deuteronomy 24:1. (Some thought that it allowed a man to divorce his wife for any reason.) What do you find interesting about *Yeshua's* understanding of this passage? How might this apply to God's "marriage" to Israel?

For further study, see

Haftarah : Isaiah 54:1-10

Brit Hadashah : Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; 22:23-32;
Mark 10:2-12; 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38;
I Corinthians 9:4-18; Galatians 3:9-14;
I Timothy 5:17-18