

Exegetical Notes, Deuteronomy 23:15-25

“Protecting the Innocent, Part 1”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Deuteronomy 23:15-25

(Deuteronomy 23:15-25:19 presents a series of laws which are designed to protect weaker people who are guilty of no crime, but who may be victimized by more powerful persons.)

Verses 15-16

If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master.

¹⁶ Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them.

- This passage deals with a refugee slaves from a nation other than Israel. Such a person is not to be forced to return to slavery. They are to be allowed to settle in the place of their choosing in Israel and may not be oppressed by the Hebrews.

Verses 17-18

¹⁷ No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. ¹⁸ You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both.

- Prostitution is forbidden by the Law of Moses. In this case, cultic prostitution is forbidden to all Hebrews male and female. No offering can be made to Yahweh if it comes from the practice of prostitution.

Verses 19-20

¹⁹ Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest. ²⁰ You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite, so that the LORD your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

- Hebrews who lend to other Hebrews may not charge their fellow Hebrews interest on the loan. If interest is charged, it should be assumed that the interest is the blessing and no other blessing should be expected by the lender.

Verses 21-23

²¹ If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. ²² But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. ²³ Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.

- If a promise is made to God it should be honored swiftly.
- If a promise is made to God, it is certain that God will require the promise to be honored. Not to honor a promise made to God is a sin.
- It is better not to make a promise to God than to make a promise and not keep it.
- If a person makes a promise to God, they are bound by their word.

Verses 24-25

²⁴ If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. ²⁵ If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain.

- If you are passing through your neighbor's vineyard or grain field you may pick enough for feeding yourself if you are hungry at the moment. But, you must not take more than you are able to eat at that moment.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Protecting the Innocent, Part 1*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)