

Justice in the Land

Deuteronomy 19-21

I. Criminal Laws: Life, Property, & Due Process (19)

A. Due Process for Manslaughter (19:1-13)

1. Accidental Manslaughter (19:1-10)
2. Murder (19:11-13)
 - a. A note on capital punishment and being pro-life
 - b. V. 13 “you shall purge the guilt...” (Repeated 8 times in ch. 19-24)

B. Property Theft (Deut. 19:14, cp. Deut. 27:17)

C. Laws Concerning Witnesses (Deut. 19:15-21)

II. Instructions Related to Warfare (20)

A. The men must trust God rather than fear (20:1-4)

B. Exemptions from military service (20:5-9)

1. The first 3 exemptions remind us the point of the warfare: to obey God so they can LIVE in the land

“The possession of the promised land, in other words, was at the heart of Israel’s wars, and the importance of the land, in the plan of God, was that Israel was to live and work and prosper in it. The building of homes and orchards, the marrying of a wife, and other such things were of the essence of life in the promised land, and if these things ceased, then the wars would become pointless.”¹

2. Men who lack courage (courage = trusting God and doing what He says even when you feel scared).

C. Warfare outside the promised land and in the promised land (where God is using them to judge those nations)

1. Cities outside the land - offer terms of peace first (10-15)
2. The people in the promised land – destroy them from God’s place (16-18)
 - a. Does this sound harsh? Remember a few things:
 - (i) God is the judge of the earth, and all sin deserves death. Anything less than that is mercy. This prefigures the judgment at the end of the Tribulation (Rev 19:11-21)
 - (ii) Second, God foretold (warned) this would come and allowed the full measure of their sin to reach the brim before this (Gen 15:16, Deut. 18:9-12)
 - (iii) Third, if left, their wickedness would lead Israel astray (Deut. 20:18, cp. Israel’s history)
 - (iv) Fourth, there is always an implied exception to promises of total destruction: repentance (e.g., Rahab in Josh. 6:22-25. Compare Ninevah in Jonah).
3. In the New Covenant, warfare language is used in our need to stand firm against Satan’s schemes (Eph. 2:10-20) and of Jesus’s triumph over all at the cross (Col. 2:15).

D. During sieges, they may not destroy trees indiscriminately (20:19-20)

¹ Peter C. Craigie, [The Book of Deuteronomy](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 274.

III. Unsolved Murders (21:1-9)

IV. Family Law (21:10-21)

- A. Integrating and protecting a female captive who marries into the Israelite community (21:10-14)
- B. Laws protecting the inheritance rights of the firstborn (21:15-17)
- C. A Rebellious and incorrigible Son (21:18-21)

V. God's Curse on Capital Offenders (21:22-23)

A. Cursed by God

1. Galatians 3:13-14:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

- a. Jesus hung upon the tree to bear the curse in our place.
 - b. Penal substitutionary atonement.
 - (i) Took the penalty of God's just wrath
 - (ii) As our substitute
 - (iii) By giving his life to cover all our guilt.
2. RC Sproul on "The Curse Motif of the Atonement"
https://youtu.be/Lgwpd0SKpmc?si=Z_H9rdT1rTxsXzq