

## Deuteronomy 23

Verses 1 – 8

**“No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off may enter the assembly of the Lord. <sup>2</sup> No one of illegitimate birth may enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, may enter the assembly of the Lord. <sup>3</sup> No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, may ever enter the assembly of the Lord, <sup>4</sup> because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the Lord your God was unwilling to listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you. <sup>6</sup> You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days. <sup>7</sup> “You shall not loathe an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not loathe an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land. <sup>8</sup> The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord.**

**No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off may enter the assembly of the Lord.**

We are not told why eunuchs were excluded from the assembly but even Aaron’s descendants that had physical defects were limited in service.

See Leviticus 21:16-24

Based on that restriction it is likely that “the assembly of the Lord” refers to gatherings at the Tabernacle.

However, they were not excluded from the covenant.

See Isaiah 56:4-5

“To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold firmly to My covenant, <sup>5</sup> To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be eliminated.

The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) is proof of their acceptance into the kingdom

**No one of illegitimate birth may enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, may enter the assembly of the Lord.**

This would be any person born out of wedlock. It would also include persons born of incest or adultery.

That may seem unfair since the child is not the one who committed the immoral act but it would act as a deterrent since the parents would bear the shame of their child being excluded from the assembly.

The ten generations may have been literal or had the meaning of forever. Either way, the Old Covenant was done away with 1,400 years later.

**No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, may ever enter the assembly of the Lord, <sup>4</sup> because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you**

Ben-ammi became the father of the Ammonites. He was born to **Lot** by his younger daughter. Moab became the father of the Moabites. He was born to Lot by his older daughter. See Genesis 19:37–38

Since the Ammonites and Moabites were descendants of incest they were excluded from the assembly.

But they were also excluded for two other reasons:

1. Because they failed to help Israel when they needed food & water.
2. They hired Balaam to curse Israel.

See Numbers 22 – 25

We learn here that the Ammonites must have been in league with Moab & Midian

However, this prohibition from the assembly did not prohibit the intermarriage of Israelite men with Moabite or Ammonite women.

Boaz, who stands in the ancestry of Jesus, married Ruth, a Moabite

Ruth's mother, Naomi, according to Jewish tradition was an Ammonite

**7 “You shall not loathe an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not loathe an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land. 8 The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord.**

Isaac had twin boys, Esau and Jacob.

Esau became the father of the Edomite's.

See Genesis 25:19

The Egyptians did wrong by enslaving the Jews but they did accept them initially even though they were foreigners.

Edom and Egypt could enter the assembly after the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

Verses 9 - 14

**9 “When you go out as an army against your enemies, you shall be on guard against every evil thing. 10 “If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp; he may not reenter the camp. 11 But when evening approaches, he shall bathe himself with water, and at sundown he may reenter the camp.**

**12 “You shall also have a place *allocated* outside the camp, so that you may go out there *to relieve yourself*, 13 and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn and cover up your excrement. 14 Since the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to save you and to defeat your enemies before you, your camp must be holy; so He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.**

**When you go out as an army against your enemies, you shall be on guard against every evil thing.**

Israel was 1 or 2 months away from entering Canaan.

Once they enter Canaan they would be at war for about 7 years.

And many of the conflicts would involve many thousands of men.

Without some proper rules, the camp could degenerate rather quickly.

So God set down some basic rules for the men to follow

Verses 15 - 16

**<sup>15</sup> “You shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you. <sup>16</sup> He shall live with you in your midst, in the place that he chooses in one of your towns where it pleases him; you shall not mistreat him.**

The pagan world had a much different law regarding slaves. The *Code of Hammurabi* is a Babylonian legal text (1750 BC).

It decreed the death penalty to anyone harboring a runaway slave.

But here, God gave the Hebrews a superior law that protected a runaway slave from his pagan master.

The slave of a Hebrew brother would be returned to his master, but there were good reasons for this exception. The Hebrews had a law that freed their slaves after 6 years and there were laws that protected Hebrew slaves from mistreatment.

See Deut. 15:12 - 15

Verses 17 -18

**<sup>17</sup> “None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute. <sup>18</sup> You shall not bring the earnings of a prostitute or the money for a dog into the house of the Lord your God *as payment* for any vowed offering, because both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God.**

**None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.**

These were the so-called "sacred" prostitutes of the pagan temples.

The Canaanite sanctuaries were gigantic brothels made legal under the sanctions of the state religions.

The temple of Aphrodite Pan Demos was adjacent to the city of Corinth.

It had 1000 male and female prostitutes.

Tamar disguised herself as a temple prostitute when Judah sinned.

See Genesis 38:21

**You shall not bring the earnings of a prostitute or the money for a dog into the house of the Lord your God as payment for any vowed offering, because both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God.**

A male prostitute was called a dog because they engaged in sodomy.

The Tabernacle is referred to here as The House of the Lord.

It was called this for the first time in Exodus 23:19 about 9 months before the tabernacle was erected.

See timeline 2325

**Exodus time line**

Exodus	Event	Year 1 - 1446	Place
12:37	The Exodus from Egypt	1-1-01	Rameses
14:21-22	Crossing of the Red Sea		Red Sea
15:23	Bitter water		Marah
15:27	12 springs and 70 palm trees		Elim
16:01	2-15-01 Manna and quail	2-15-01	The Desert of Sin
17:01	no water, Amalekites defeated		Rephidim
18	Judges appointed		Near the Mountain of God
19:01	Camped in front of the mountain	3-1-01	The Desert of Sinai
20	The ten commandments		The Desert of Sinai
21-23	Laws and regulations		The Desert of Sinai
24	Covenant confirmed		The Desert of Sinai
25-31	Tabernacle envisioned		The Desert of Sinai
32	Golden Calf	4-10-01	The Desert of Sinai
33	Tent of Meeting		The Desert of Sinai
34	New stone tablets	40 days	The Desert of Sinai
36-39	Building the Tabernacle	7 months	The Desert of Sinai
40:1	Set up the Tabernacle	1-1-02	The Desert of Sinai

The tent of meeting was first mentioned in Exodus 33:7 – 11 so it preceded the Tabernacle by at least 8 months.

However it is quite possible that the tent of meeting was first set up some time between the Exodus (1-1-01) and chapter 33 (the 4<sup>th</sup> month of year 1). If that was the case then it preceded the Tabernacle by 9 to 12 months.

Verses 19 – 20

**<sup>19</sup> “You are not to charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned on interest. <sup>20</sup> You may charge interest to a foreigner, but to your countrymen you shall not charge interest, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land which you are about to enter to possess.**

Israel had been greatly blessed and God expected His people to pass those blessing on to those who were less fortunate.

Lending money at 0% interest was one way of doing this.

This law was first given in Exodus 22:25

Foreigners were to be treated fairly under the law, but they could be charged interest.

Verses 21 – 23

**<sup>21</sup> “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly require it of you, and it will be a sin for you. <sup>22</sup> However, if you refrain from making vows, it will not be a sin for you. <sup>23</sup> You shall be careful and perform what goes out of your lips, since in fact you have vowed a voluntary offering to the Lord your God, whatever you have promised.**

The vows mentioned here were about voluntary offerings which was covered in length in Leviticus 27.

Verse 22 says if you don't make a vow, concerning a voluntary offering, you haven't done any wrong.

When Jesus commented on taking an oath he said, “But I say to you, do not take oaths at all.”

See Matthew 5:34-37

The scope of Jesus' statement was much broader than here in Deuteronomy and that is why He said, “Let your word be ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no.’”

This included any oath, to God or man, in court or in every day affairs.

An honest man has no need to take a vow, because his word is good.

Verses 24 – 25

<sup>24</sup> **“When you enter your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat grapes until you are satisfied; but you are not to put *any* in your basket.**

<sup>25</sup> **“When you enter your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand, but you are not to use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain.**

A neighbor should not be taken advantage of.