

Deuteronomy

Lesson #19, Chapter 20-21

What a blessing to know God helps His children understand His Word! Be sure to ask Him to help you as you come to this lesson.

1. What situation is addressed in 20:1?
2. Who is to speak to the men in 20:2? How would he encourage them?
3. Who is to speak to the men in 20:5? What does he tell them to consider?
4. Who would be left to go into battle based on what you've just read from 20:1-9? What truth would encourage the fainthearted and also give the commanders of the army enough confidence to allow men to stay home and take care of their families and homes? See also 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; and Joshua 23:9-10.
5. Notice how in verses 3 and 4 the priest was to impart courage to the men by telling them the truth about God. He reminded them of God's character and His purposes. How do you rely on God's Word for courage when you are afraid?
6. Does God still fight for us? Is He still with us in the battles we face? See Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Ephesians 6:10-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 4:17-18.

7. What situation is addressed in 20:10 once the army is mustered and ready for battle? What specifics are given for handling that situation in verses 10-15?

8. What different situation is addressed in 20:16-18? Why?

9. What further regulations does God address in 20:19-20? Why would God be so concerned about trees—and fruit trees at that?

10. When was Israel allowed to show mercy to the heathen nations and when were they commanded to destroy every living thing (20:10-15 and 16-18)? How can that principle help guide you in your relationships with others and with your own battles against sin?

11. What situation is being addressed in 21:1? What are the elders of the city trying to determine in 21:2-3?

12. What is happening with the heifer and why are they to do that in 21:3-9?

13. Read Numbers 35:16-21, 29-34. What do you learn about the importance of properly handling a murder case? Why? How does the situation in Numbers 35 mesh with the example given in Deuteronomy 21?

14. Notice that if the elders of the city don't investigate the dead body, if they don't exonerate themselves of any guilt toward the dead person, they will be held responsible for that person's death. Often in the Scriptures we see that one person's actions can affect the many, for good or for evil. For example, the nation experienced the consequences of David's sin of numbering the people in 2 Samuel 24:1-14 and the churches in Revelation 2-3 experienced Jesus' criticism for their failure to stand up for the truth and to fight for purity. Explain what attitudes about responsibility the Lord desires to teach His people from His regulations in these verses (21:1-9).

In the next two paragraphs we read about how to treat a captive wife and the unloved wife's son. It is important to keep in mind that when God addresses divorce or polygamy in the Scriptures it is not because He endorses or accepts it. He made provision for it in the Scriptures because of the hardness of men's hearts (Matthew 19:1-9). The examples given in our text were to be used as a guide for behavior and attitudes toward those who might not be treated fairly. The people would then be able to take the principles extracted here and use them as a rule for their conduct when they encountered similar situations.

The Word of God does not and cannot contain examples for every specific situation one might encounter. However, it does contain the principles needed to guide conduct and give wisdom for each situation. The whole counsel of God is to be examined and specific passages pertaining to each particular situation are to be studied, then the leaders are able to make wise and informed decisions.

15. In the case of the captive wife, what standards for behavior and attitudes are to be maintained?

16. In the example of the unloved wife's son, what standards for behavior and attitudes are to be maintained?

17. What do these two examples and Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 68:5; 146:9; and James 1:27 teach you about God's care for those who have no rights and no ability to stand up for themselves? What are some specific ways you might watch out for those who might be overlooked?

18. What can you learn about the rebellious son in 21:18-21?

19. What responsibility do parents have when they have a rebellious son? Why? How do the parents' actions reveal their love for God? How do the son's actions reveal his disdain for God?

20. What are some ways to help prevent this type of heartbreak as a parent? See Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 29:15, 17; Ephesians 6:4.

21. Finally, in 21:22-23 what regulation is given? Why?

22. Though Chapter 21 contains different scenarios, what unifying theme ties the chapter together?

23. What aspects of God's character did you observe from these regulations?