

JUST PRACTICES IN SOCIETY

I. Introduction

Welcome to our continuing study in the book of Deuteronomy. We are at our 36th lesson and at the 21st chapter of the book. We have not been rushing but have still treated many things in a very limited way. After the historical review of chapters 1-4, Moses work of the "second law" is seen essentially in chapters 5-26. 5-11 sketch the basis of Israel's faith while chapters 12-26 show the expression of that faith as the knowledge of the will of God surfaces in the events of everyday life. In chapter 21 we deal with a number of societal and domestic issues and we are reminded that those who belong to the Lord are expected to live that way in all of life. The material in our chapter is organized on these lines:

- 21:1-9...clearing in an uncertain killing
- 10-14.a captive wife
- 15-17 two wives and a kinship question
- 18-21 a rebellious child
- 22-23 qualifications on a death penalty

Well, it is a diverse collection of teachings and we will look at them section by section.

II. Discussion

21:1-9....this amounts to a murder mystery..one is found slain and it is not known who is responsible..

- v. 2..the elders and judges will determine the nearest city
- v. 3..a sacrificial animal is taken from that city
- v. 4..and is slain in the valley
- v. 5..the priests will come for adjudication
- v. 6..the elders wash their hands over the heifer (those of the nearest city)
- v. 7..and shall deny complicity
- v. 8..they pray not to be charged with innocent blood
- v. 9..and when all is done, as the Lord has instructed..the potentiality of guilt is ended..innocence is set.  
We still don't know who did it..but know who did not do it and that will have to suffice for the moment.

21:10-14...the captive wife.

- v. 10..Israel has taken prisoners
- v. 11..and an Israelite takes a captive for a wife
- v. 12..she is brought to his home where she spends a month in mourning and then becomes his wife.
- v. 14..and if she proves not to be a good wife..she is allowed to leave, not to be sold or abused