
Day 61 – March 2

The Laws of Moses (1450 – 1400 BCE)
Marriage, Divorce and Sexual Relations
Marriage
Divorce
Sexual Violations
Separation of Sexes

Readings: *Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:1-20, 22-30; 19:20-22, 29; 20:10-24; Numbers 5:11-31; Deuteronomy 5:18; 21:10-14; 22:5, 13-14, 22-24, 30; 23:17-18; 24:1-5*

Reflections:

- Marriage, divorce and sexuality in general had a much different overall perspective than we have now in western countries. Definitely Jesus teaching on divorce changed a great deal but we can see here how things are much different than what we experience today. Also, compared to other societies of its day, these laws have a strong emphasis on protecting women and victimization. In other societies, women were considered property like slaves and virtually had no rights.
- The practice of proving virginity obviously caused an interesting first night. This practice was again another symbol of covenant faithfulness. Faithfulness was not just to be practiced after the marriage but also before the marriage. We may say there is a double standard here but if you consider the rules, you realize it is consistent. If no unmarried women can have sex with another man and no married women can have sex with another man, there are no women for the men to have sex with. The only way for there to be sexual relations is within the covenant relationship.
- The whole test of adultery is one of those places where the symbolism and ritual around the curse has the feel of a witch doctor. Again, what are important are the pictures and symbols involved.
- The long list of who you can't have sex with is establishing who a person could or could not marry. The focus is maintaining healthy family boundaries.

- Here is another interesting verse: Deuteronomy 24:5 “If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.” Here we see a very high priority placed on building a solid marriage foundation and the high priority men were to give to investing into their marriage and wives.