



LESSON 01: POLYESTER & POVERTY

Personal Piety and Civic Justice (Pentateuch)

Introduction

I. Context: Exodus

II. Leviticus

- Theme: "Be holy, because I am holy" (19:2) – Walter Brueggemann.
- And yet "love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18).
- Plus a whole chapter (19) of care for marginalized people.

But mainly:

Sacrifices

→ [Lev 1:2](#)

When anyone among you brings an offering to the Lord, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

Diet

→ [Lev 11:2-3](#)

Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3 You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.

Circumcision

→ [Lev 12:3](#)

On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised.

Festivals & Holy Days

→ [Lev 23:34](#)

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord's Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days.

III. Deuteronomy

- Theme: "For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess" (30:16).
- After 40-year journey that should have taken about 2 weeks, Moses gives his last words.
- How to live well and be faithful in the new land.

Instructions for Judges

→ [Deut 1:16-17](#)

¹⁶And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. ¹⁷Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it."

Mandatory Food Redistribution

→ [Deut 14:28-29](#)

²⁸At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ²⁹so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Loan Forgiveness

→ [Deut 15:1](#)

¹At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts.

Sanctuary Cities

→ [Deut 19:2](#)

Set aside for yourselves three cities in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess [for] anyone who kills a neighbor unintentionally, without malice aforethought. [This] man may flee to one of these cities and save his life. Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage.

Slave Emancipation

→ [Deut 23:15-16](#)

¹⁵If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. ¹⁶Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them.

IV. Dual Emphases

- Leviticus: Personal Purity: Watch Out For Your Actions
- Deuteronomy: Civic Justice: Watch Out for Y'All's Actions
- Not a clean divide

Mandatory Food Donations

→ [Lev 19:9-10](#)

⁹“When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

Don't Make Idols

→ [Deut 4:15-19](#)

¹⁵You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, ¹⁶so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, ¹⁷or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. ¹⁹And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.

V. Conclusion: Balance

When God sets up a society, personal purity and civic justice are both important.

