

Matthew 19-06-23a

This is the 23rd of June, 2019. We're in Matthew chapter five, verses 17 through 20. Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets.

I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study and then we'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is for us to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will bless the content to each of our hearts. Help us to remember it, to see its pertinence and applicability in our circumstances, in our interactions with one another, and in our opportunity to represent the Lord Jesus and through you, through him to represent you and your glory on this earth. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

It seems pretty straightforward until you start to think about it that Jesus did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. We say, well, it's the righteous requirement of the law. We are fallen.

We can never keep all of God's ordinances. Jesus came and is our fulfillment. When we are in him, we partake of his righteousness.

So he's fulfilled the law and in him, we are credited with having fulfilled the law. But the more you think about that, the more convoluted and twisted it gets because we still sin and the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. But in what sense did Jesus fulfill the law? Did he observe every ordinance? Did he obey every command? There are hundreds of ritual requirements in the Old Testament law.

And Jesus was sometimes accused of having actually violated them rather than fulfilling them. There are certainly regulations that pertain to women that wouldn't apply to him. So how could he fulfill those? And we say, well, it's the spirit of the law.

Well, how exactly does that work? Can I disregard the speed limit and say, well, but the spirit of the law is don't run into anybody at high speed. It seems a bit of a dodge. So this morning, what we're going to do is look at this section very closely and we're going to see how Jesus fulfilled the law and through him, how we actually fulfill the Old Testament law.

It is not enough to say that it's fulfilled by proxy. We should fulfill the law. You say, oh, is grace and truth going to become a Seventh-day Adventist church? Are we going to refrain from pork and start sewing tassels on our garments and so on? Well, kind of.

We're going to kind of do that. So how does this work? Let's begin by reading the passage in Matthew chapter five, verses 17 through 20. Jesus says, all of this is red ink in your red letter edition.

Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away.

Now, let me just break in and ask you, have the heaven and earth passed away yet? One jot or one tittle, one yod, or one corner of a letter, like the difference between a cough and a bait. It's a backward looking C, but if there's a little tail on the bottom corner, that makes it a bait instead of a cough. We've seen that over in Psalm 119.

Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Now, is Jesus saying, well, in a year or two when I'm crucified and I've fulfilled the law, why does he say till heaven and earth pass away? Why doesn't he say, why doesn't he leave out heaven and earth and just say one jot and one tittle will not pass from the law until it's fulfilled. And that fulfillment is coming soon because I am the fulfillment.

And once I complete my mission here on earth, within the next few years, the law will be set aside and abrogated and no longer pertinent. Do you catch the tone of what he's saying here? Till heaven and earth pass away, nothing's gonna be taken from the law. The smallest detail pertains until it is fulfilled.

And the idea is the fulfillment doesn't come until heaven and earth pass away. That's the connotation here. And to be honest and looking at it, that's what it says.

So what about the law for us? We need to be paying attention here. Till heaven and earth pass away, nothing's gonna be taken from the law. Not the smallest detail until it's all fulfilled.

And the idea is that all of human history is gonna be required before this fulfillment takes place. And when it is fulfilled, that's when heaven and earth can safely pass away. Verse 19, pay attention now.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Do you have any aspirations of attaining to the kingdom of heaven? Where you are in that kingdom, according to the Lord Jesus, depends on keeping these commandments, right? That's just the plain meaning of it.

You say, well, maybe that's just for Israel. Well, maybe it is, but maybe it isn't. Heaven and earth have not passed away.

And the setting aside of the nation of Israel did not cause the heaven and earth to pass away. So if we're the people of God, what does this mean for us? I say to you, verse 20, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Your righteousness has to exceed the scribes and Pharisees, or you don't even get in.

If you're not in, you don't even fall into the range of least and greatest in the kingdom, do you? Because people that are in the kingdom are ranged across those values of least to greatest. There's other people that are alive, resurrected, eternal future life, but they are not in the kingdom. If you don't have righteousness better than the scribes and Pharisees, you won't enter.

What does this say about the scribes and Pharisees? Will they enter? They will not. Well, that's our section. Now, the key here, in my view, is to understand what the law is.

Because everything hinges on the law. Jesus does not destroy the law, but fulfills it. The Lord Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.

He says this, I did not come to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Heaven and earth will not pass away until all is fulfilled.

So in some sense, the Lord Jesus has not yet fulfilled all of the law, because if he had, the heaven and earth would have been retired by now. That's the notion here. Well, what I have decided to do for my own benefit, and hopefully for the rest of us, is to take a representative section of the law and look at it and see how these two things illuminate each other.

What Jesus says about the law and what the law says itself. Turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 22. Deuteronomy chapter 22.

This is not only a representative section of the law, but it is a difficult section. It is an often cited section in terms of negative comments about the law, about Israel and about God himself. Because it seems to contain a very harsh, unfair and strange requirement, including the death penalty.

We've got a section here. We're gonna be looking at Deuteronomy chapter 22 versus one through about 21. One to 21.

This will suffice. The earlier part seems somewhat ironic, but you have to understand the earlier part to understand 13 through 21, which is the difficult section. I'm gonna read this very quickly.

Just be thinking in terms of our question. What is our question this morning? What does it mean for the law to be fulfilled? Jesus said, I have come to fulfill the law. One jot or one tittle will not pass from the law until it's all fulfilled.

Heaven and earth will not pass away until all is fulfilled, right? So here's a representative section of the law. You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray and hide yourself from them. You shall certainly bring them back to your brother.

And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to

your own house and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it, then you shall restore it to him. You shall do the same with his donkey and so shall you do with his garment, with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise, you must not hide yourself. So no finders keepers in Israel.

You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road and hide yourself from them. You shall surely help him lift them up again. A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord, your God.

If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way in any tree or on the ground with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. You shall surely let the mother go and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days. The earlier ones were pretty straightforward.

This seems a bit more cryptic, doesn't it? When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it. Remember the ancient stone houses had a patio on the roof. He says, if you build a new house, you be sure and build a safety rail around the edges of that upper patio.

This is the thing that they took the stones out of and let the guy down through for Jesus to heal, the man on the bed there, take up your bed and walk. So there would be steps on the outside of the house and a neighbor could come up there and say, wow, nice house and then fall off and break something or be killed. So you're required to have a rail on your brother's account.

Verse nine, you shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.

You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself. That's the first part. That's the introduction to the difficult section.

Keep in mind now, all of this, we're looking at with the view of, Jesus says, I've come to fulfill the law and nothing's gonna pass from it. Heaven and earth will not pass away until it's all fulfilled. So this is the law, not to mention the prophets, but this is the law.

So in what sense does Jesus fulfill this? Now it gets even more interesting in verses 13 through 21. If any man takes a wife and goes into her and detests her, hates her, and charges her with shameful conduct and brings a bad name on her and says, I took this woman and when I came to her, I found she was not a virgin. This is the accusation of

premarital sex.

This girl has been promiscuous and I married her with the idea that she's a virgin and pure, but she's not. I found this out on the wedding night. And so he is spreading this slander and this innuendo and this charge around in the community.

He's talking. Then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out, notice the italics here, the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man as wife and he detests her.

Now he has charged her with shameful conduct saying, I found your daughter was not a virgin. And yet these are, note the italics, the evidences of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him and they shall find him 100 shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel and she shall be his wife. He cannot divorce her all his days. But if the thing is true and italics, evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house.

And the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel to play the harlot in her father's house. So, or in this manner, you shall put away the evil from among you. Well, we seem to have a case here at first glance of a virginity test.

And this would appear to be some physical evidence that seems to prove that the girl is in fact what she was represented to be when the guy married her. Well, we'll get into that in a moment because this is usually seen and interpreted and I mean widely so by both theologians and people who are harboring a grudge against the Bible and want to find problems with it. And they say, you know what this is? This is what they still do in some Arab cultures today where there's a cloth that needs to be bloodstained on the wedding night because there are certain physical things that should take place.

If a virgin is, they call it virgo intact or some such thing in Latin. But, you know, this is a very difficult idea that that would be required. And we'll get into that in a moment.

But this is seen to be some early example of this. Well, you've got to have sheets from the wedding night bed that will be marked with this evidence. And that's what's gonna be shown to the elders and that proves she was a virgin.

Well, there are numerous problems with that. In the first place, that's very unreliable. There are a lot of reasons why a small amount of bleeding would not take place even if you had never engaged in relations with a man previously.

There are all kinds of ways that that would not happen. Secondly, it's so easy to fake. And in Arab cultures, what they do is they have a little vial of lamb's blood and they give it to the bride and say, you be sure and, you know, spill a little of this on the sheets so that, you know, everybody's gonna be happy.

Look, here it is. It's absurdly easy to fake. So is this a dumb idea? And is that what this is talking about in scripture? And it's unscientific, it's mystical almost, it's ignorant, it's unfair.

What if there's a perfectly pure young lady who doesn't happen to have this little tear that produces a little bit of bleeding and then there's, you know, if everything's on the up and up and nobody fakes it, well, I am a virgin, but for some reason it didn't happen. And then she's stoned to death at her father's house. I mean, this is just fraught with problems.

Well, isn't this typical of many of the requirements of the Old Testament law? It seems to be in some cases primitive. It is certainly in many cases culture bound. And so Jesus says, I've come to fulfill this law.

Well, if the law is full of weird things and unscientific things and dumb things, what is it Jesus is fulfilling? How does he fulfill it? That's what we're gonna talk about. What is the best way to approach and try to understand a difficult passage? You know, in real estate, it's the three L's, which is location, location, and location. What is it in the interpretation of scripture? It's the three C's.

Context, context, context, the immediate context, the larger context, and the spiritual context. Context will solve, and you are, I think, going to be surprised at how straightforward this passage is going to become when we look at the context. And that's why we read the first 12 verses.

So we're gonna take a quick look at this because the principle involved here in this section of Deuteronomy is quite obviously, from the beginning of this chapter, looking out for the interests of your brother. This can be the brother that you know. This is your fellow Israelite.

Brother means fellow Israelite. That's how he can be a brother and maybe you don't know him. So again, look at the beginning.

You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray and hide yourself from them. You shall certainly bring them back to your brother. If your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, he's a fellow Israelite, but you do not know him, then you bring that stuff home and you hold it in trust until you can find him, right? Do the same with his donkey.

Do that with his garment. Any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you

have found, you must not hide yourself. In other words, you are required to look out for your brother's interests.

You can't just step back and say, I don't wanna get involved. Any possession, any interest, and this is continued later on when you build your house in verse eight. When you build a new house, it says parapet, but this is a guardrail.

This is a safety rail, a little fence around the edge so that your brother who is visiting or has come to the house warming or whatever doesn't, in this unfamiliar new house, step off and fall to injury or death. And that principle is in all of these requirements in the first 12 verses. So you have the idea of looking out for his property.

You have the idea of looking out for his safety. This is pretty clear, right? Now, how about some of these others? You shall not, a woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment. All who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God.

Why would that be? What does it hurt for a man to put on a dress in our day or for a woman to disguise herself as a man? Barbara Streisand made a whole movie about where she evidently in her endeavor to learn the law, she wants to go to Yeshiva or she wants to go, I never saw the movie actually, but I saw little pieces of it. But she dresses up like a man so that she can go study Torah with the guys. And it's like a woman's liberation metaphor in some way.

But it's an explicit requirement of the law that she don't dress up like a guy. And that's what she does with the idea that she's gonna go study the law. And as soon as she gets to Deuteronomy 22, she's convicted out of her own.

I mean, how does that work? Anyway, this is the idea. Well, what does the Yentl character in that movie, I don't know if you've seen it, but what is the idea of dressing up like a man? What does it do with regard to others? It's a deception. It is representing yourself to be one thing when you are something else.

And this is not in the interest of your brother. You should act in a way that is pure and clear and obvious and straightforward and in the interest of your brother. Remember when Jesus sums up the law and he says it can all be summarized under two principles.

Love the Lord your God with all your soul, all your strength, all your heart, all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. You would not want to be deceived. You would not want to be put at risk.

You would not have your possessions go astray. You would hope that somebody was looking out for you. You should look out for them.

This entire set of a dozen verses is really an expanded version of the golden rule. And

some of these are more obvious than others, but the wearing garments pertaining to a man, this partakes of a number of things. Why is this an abomination to the Lord your God? God made people the gender that they are.

This is his work. And to cross-dress, to endeavor, and the clothing represents who you are. This is gonna be pertinent even later in the chapter, but clothing signals to others.

It's like the label on a can. You go to the store into the canned goods section where they got the peas and the corn and the green beans and the fruit, and it's all in cans. If you've ever been in a situation as I have where there's been a flood and all those paper labels got washed off and all they are is cans, and it's literally pot luck.

You open a can, you don't know what's in there. Or what if somebody takes the labels off and mislabels them? Years ago, there were people poisoning pain pills. Forget if it was Tylenol or what, but somebody laced the Tylenol, and ever after they've had those special seals.

Why? Because the label that you read that says, this is good for you and will help ease your pain is important, and there shouldn't be something in the bottle that isn't on the label. People have to be sensitive now about gluten and about things that they're allergic to. The label is everything.

Well, for people, clothing is the label. And clothing reflects what God made you to be. And women shouldn't try to be men, think like men, and therefore dress like men.

Men should not be effeminate and want to be women and dress that way. And you look at Bruce Jenner and people like that that are deeply confused. And there was an excellent article I will post along with these notes on the website by a psychologist who says, you know, there's been such an effort to try to let children pick their gender.

And I'm a woman trapped in a man's body. I'm a girl trapped in a boy's body or a boy trapped in a girl's body or whatever. And I want to change over and I want surgery and I'm going to dress and I'm going to, you know, make up and grow my hair out and get hormones and all the rest of it.

And the man said, look, and he's not a believer. He's not coming at it from a spiritual point of view at all. He is a clinical psychologist.

And he said, this ought to be addressed properly as a mental problem in the same way that if someone thinks they're Napoleon, I saw a funny movie, I was telling mom the other night, don't ask me how I stumbled onto this, but long story short, there is a movie called Bubba Hotep. And it's really funny. It's got Ossie Davis in it and another guy, but they're two old guys in a rest home.

And of course, Ossie Davis is black and the other guy is white. The white guy thinks he is

Elvis and Ossie Davis thinks he's John F. Kennedy. And he's got pictures of Oswald and Jack Ruby on his wall.

He's got a full model mock-up of the grassy knoll and a shooter behind a fence. I mean, he's the whole thing in his room. And he's, Ossie Davis is John F. Kennedy.

He believes it and Elvis believes it. And Jack believes that the other guy is Elvis. And so they're totally convinced that they are who they think they are.

And I don't know who thought up this movie, but some kind of way a mummy falls out of a truck and gets in the swamp and wakes up and has no name and is under a curse. And these two guys, Elvis and John F. Kennedy have to kill this mummy because it's killing the other residents. It was amusing, I'll give it that.

But somebody who is convinced that they are someone or something else, there are people who think they are a cat or they think they're a bird or they think they're... We recognize this as a serious mental problem. It's a mental illness and we try to treat it as such. Well, for somebody to think that they are actually a different gender, this psychologist argues is in that category.

And we ought to try to help people get back to the reality of who they are. And it's really only a modern day sort of a malady. You don't find in history somebody thinking that they were born the wrong gender, that this has come out of some cultural things we won't go into.

But that's why this be what you are represented to be, be what you were made to be. Whatever hand of cards you were dealt, make the most of it. If you're short, be a great short person.

If you're tall, be a great tall person. If you're this gender or that gender or you're in the tribe of Levi, be a great priest. If you're a Jebusite, be a great hewer of wood and hauler of water.

Whatever your assignment is, be that and don't try to be anything that is contrary. You can aspire to be more. You can aspire to be better.

You can develop gifts. You can acquire skills. Nothing wrong with growing and being, the army used to say, be all you can be, do that.

But don't do something that is opposite contrary and is potentially deceptive to others. I've actually known Marines who were out looking for a good time with somebody of the opposite gender and got quite far along in the process only to discover that this was a, somebody dressed up as a woman that was actually a man. And you talk about somebody being traumatized and questioning a lot of assumptions about themselves.

You know, how could I be that attractive to this person who wasn't even a girl? But deception is the idea. So here are the three principles. There should be purity.

There should be responsibility, looking out for the interests of others. Purity, be what you represent yourself to be, be what you look like. That's purity.

And without corruption and without fault and without compromise or admixture, be pure. Be that thing and be it fully and purely. Take responsibility to not mislead, deceive, scam, or otherwise harm the interests of your neighbor.

And finally, do this as unto the Lord. This is God's requirement. And even if you think, well, but wouldn't it be great if we as God's people do what we do and we strive to please God because He is our God and our Savior.

And that's why the injunction to not cross dress in verse five, don't do this because people who do this are an abomination to the Lord. I don't want to be an abomination to the Lord. He is the definition of righteousness.

He is the judge of righteousness. And sin, that's why the Holy Spirit convicts us in righteousness and judgment. So these three elements, you live your life before God.

That's love the Lord, your God with all your heart. The first great commandment. And the second is like unto it, love your neighbor as yourself.

Be pure and undefiled and be what you look like. What you're represented to be. This is the notion of integrity.

You're the same on the outside as you are on the inside. You're not a hypocrite. You don't appear to be something on the outside and you're something different on the inside.

And for the people who are gender confused or identity confused and think that they're an animal or think that they're the reincarnation of somebody from the past, you say, well, shouldn't they dress like John F. Kennedy if they think they're the assassinated president? No, there is a problem on the inside that needs to be fixed with reference to the outside. If Ossie Davis looked in the mirror, he'd say, wait a minute, I don't think I can be John F. Kennedy. It is pretty humorous though, because he makes reference to the whole notion of where's the president's brain.

And he says, I could do a lot better if they found the rest of my brain and so on. It's somewhat witty in places, but you see the idea here, right? That is the concept. Now, what about the bird's nest? A bird's nest happens to be before you along the way in any tree or on the ground with young ones or eggs.

Mother's sitting on the young or on the eggs. You shall not take the mother with the

young. You shall not take the mother with the young.

Now, notice the specific context. You are out, you're out in nature. These are not penned birds.

These are not domestic birds. These are birds in the wild. You are along the way.

You're outside the camp. You're outside the town. It's in a tree or it's on the ground.

And there is a mother and she's either got eggs or she's got young chicks. And the requirement here is you don't take the mother, the eggs or the young all back with you. Why? And I've seen a lot of commentary on this.

People say, well, the mother has experienced freedom. And if you take her captive, she's gonna mourn like a dove for her lost. It's like tying a duck to a stump that wants to be free and he can't fly or the geese flying north or south for the winter.

And he's a wild duck and you're trying to tame him and that's cruel to the animal. In this context, that might be the case. And you could say, well, animals raised in captivity don't miss their freedom the way a free bird that is taken captive would.

But it doesn't say if you find a bird in the wild, don't capture it. It's only a mother bird that's got young with her. So for Dan benefit, I don't think that explanation will fly.

What actually I think is going on in this context is that if you only take the young, the mother is free to have another brood. This maintains the natural balance. There will be birds in the future that other people who happen to be out in the way and need food or need some birds that they can domesticate and make into a flock.

These were raised for food. They were raised for sacrifice, turtle doves and pigeons and such. Well, if you keep taking, you're ending the line there.

If you take them both and you leave the mother, you could argue, well, which is she gonna miss more, her freedom or her chicks? I just don't think the freedom thing really works. I think it's a nice idea in the abstract. But in reality, this is don't kill the goose that lays the eggs.

Don't take everything out of nature. Take the produce of nature, but leave the source there to make more. If you're gonna get honey out of a honeycomb, don't destroy the hive and the bees.

Just take honey and leave the bees to reconstruct and renew. This is looking toward renewal of the resource. You're looking out for the interests of others.

If somebody goes out and captures the whole bird population and takes the mothers and the eggs, there's not gonna be birds for somebody else. And in Israel, this was a food

source and a source for poor people to obtain sacrifice that they could never afford so that they could approach God with pigeons or turtle doves. So it is at first blush sort of cryptic, but when you look at it, this is looking out for the interests of others.

You leave the natural balance in place. You take the young, they could have been predated. If you hadn't taken them, a fox might've eaten them.

But the mother can live to have more young. So this seems to be the idea. You shall not sow your vineyard nine through 11 with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

And what does this mean? Why can't you, don't we have crop rotation and such? This again goes to purity. What if you lease or sell this vineyard and you've been growing cabbages or something along with the grapes, and you sell this thing as a vineyard and something else is gonna be coming up. And the idea here is that by mixing, you reduce the fruitfulness, it can reduce its value, it can reduce its produce and things should be dedicated.

And the notion here is dedication. Dedicate this patch of ground to grapes, dedicate this patch of ground to barley. Don't try to grow barley in the spaces between your grapes.

Don't try to grow barley and wheat together. How will you separate the barley and the wheat to have pure flour? Purity is the idea. Now is, and we're coming to the principle and this is gonna close our first session.

What is the righteousness here? Where is the righteousness? A lot of us wear t-shirts that are a mixture of cotton and polyester. We have many garments that gain benefit by mixing a little bit of cotton and polyester and a little bit of elastic with the thread. Or you might have a jacket that has an inner lining of fleece or wool or something warm and then the outside might be a nylon shell that repels water, be handy this morning.

So are we violating a moral principle by mixing two kinds of cloth in the same garment today? Here is the point for our first session this morning. I wore my tie. I don't know if you can see this tie.

This is my hieroglyphic tie. Patty gave me this tie and it's a black background and it's hieroglyphics off of the Egyptian mummy tombs. Got Egyptian mummies on the mind for some reason.

We got the hieroglyphics here. Now you could look at these hieroglyphics as I do because I know Hebrew and Greek and Spanish and I can get by in a couple of other languages but hieroglyphics, I'm just helpless. It just looks like a row of birds and canes and eyes and things like that.

I can't make heads or tails out of this. So I look at it and say, well, that just doesn't make

any sense. Much as people can come to the Old Testament law requirements and say, well, that just doesn't make any sense.

I know what a bird is. I know what an eye is. I know what three parallel lines is.

It looks like waves of water in some cases and you can see these pictograms and you say, well, I know what that represents but stringing them together is just silly. Well, to someone who is versed in this language, it is meaningful. There are Pharaoh names inscribed in an oval.

There's a name for that thing. It's a cartouche and you can see Cleopatra or you can see one of the other Egyptians names, King Tut and some of these guys, Ramses, that he's got a little cartouche. Well, an Egyptian or an Egyptologist can look at that and instantly recognize it.

People versed in hieroglyphics could read this tie and tell me if it's actually gobbledygook or if it's copied off of a wall somewhere and says, may the great Ross smile upon this dead guy that we just wrapped in bandages and planted with all of his household goods and take him to the sky and give him benefits and we sure miss him and hope he doesn't come back as some kind of a scary guy. I don't know what it might say, but they would know and they could read it. This is a language and the morality, the moral principle is not in the letters of the language, it is in the concept that that language expresses.

And you find this, remember I talked about the three C's of context, the larger context of Deuteronomy 22, you can go back to chapters 20 and 21. And this is specifically for Israel at a historic point in time when they are entering the land of Canaan. They're going into the land of Canaan because the iniquity of the Amorites, the current inhabitants, Amorites covers Hivites, Hittites, Gergesites, all of the Ites that are in the land, their iniquity is full.

God had the Israelites write his law on the cliff side decades before they came in. And they had a chance to read that and like Rahab and some of the other inhabitants of the land and to come to the God of Israel. They looked at that and said, well, that's just silly.

So when you go to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you do not be afraid of them, the Lord God is with you who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Notice how time bound and circumstance bound this is. You're going to be going up against horses and chariots because the Lord God brought you out of Egypt and he is bringing you into this land.

And these are people God wants you to be the agent of their removal and their destruction. They are child sacrificing, Molech worshiping, depraved, cruel, heartless people. And they and everything associated with them, whether it's their children or

their possessions must all be destroyed.

This is why Achan got in trouble for even taking some of their clothing or some of their possessions and hiding it in his tent. God said, that stuff is defiled by association. All of it has to go.

So when you're on the verge of battle, the priest will approach and speak to the people. This is a priest, this is Israel. This is in a point in time.

Now, we look at circumstances like this. We look at narratives in the Old Testament and we extract from it a timeless moral principle. There is a moral principle that whatever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men.

And that principle pervades chapter 20 and chapter 21. And there are captives involved in the treatment of those captives. Well, Israel isn't gonna keep on taking captives.

This is during the days of their warfare, when they are conquering and settling the land according to God's instruction. But there's gonna be future days where there are no captives. But the moral treatment of these captives, looking out for their interests and not being cruel and not acting the way the people of the land act, being distinct and separate from them, marked out by certain unique behaviors that God has prescribed for his people, marks them as distinct and separate and pure.

They are people who respect their neighbors, who look out for their neighbors. They are people dedicated to their God, who live their lives to please God. And there are specific behaviors in that time, in that culture, in that place that are prescribed.

Now, we don't go out looking for food and find a bird on the ground in a nest and have to make a decision about whether to only take the eggs or take the hen and the eggs, do we? But the principle, the moral principle is not in that expression of birds and nests and eggs and young. It is in what is loving my neighbor as myself. The times have changed.

The expression of that principle is different in our day than it was then. Look at the last requirement in verse 12. You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself.

Tassels or fringe, it's translated both ways. Fringe on the corners of your garment. What is up with this? Well, I will tell you now and we'll see it right after the break.

The morality is not in whether or not you have fringe on your garment. The moral principle is in what that fringe represents, just like the hieroglyphics. The meaning is not just in the bird painted onto my tie here or onto the walls of a tomb or in an inscription in Egypt.

That bird represents something else. It's a symbol like the letters in our alphabet. These

pictograms were ideas.

They represented things and it is a mistake and it's easy to throw rocks at the specific requirements of the law and miss the moral principle, which is not in that specific expression. It is in the meaning of it and the mindset and the heart of love for God and love for others that it was to symbolize, that it was to express and was to distinguish God's people Israel from the people in the land. And sometimes you had to make sort of an arbitrary distinction and say these practices pertain in Israel.

And if anybody says, well, that's just goofy. We don't do that. You can explain your dedication to God and your understanding of the principle behind these expressions.

Well, we're gonna pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to see these tassels or this fringe and then we're going to see how this shines such a great light on 13 through 21 in terms of this supposed virginity test. All of this, looking at Jesus, not coming to destroy this law, but to fulfill it.

We'll come back after the break.