

Discussion Questions

Old Testament

1. Deuteronomy describes a system for dealing with the poor and others in need. How does the Israelite's system compare with modern notions on this matter? Would the Israelite's system work if implemented in our modern society?
2. In Deuteronomy 7:1-2, God tells the Israelites to utterly destroy certain nations as they take their land. Then, in Deuteronomy 7:3-4, He instructs them not to permit their children to intermarry with the people of those nations. If they had "utterly destroyed" these nations, who was left to marry? And do these verses apply to modern Christians—that is, should we interpret God's instructions to mean we should not marry people from other nations?

New Testament

1. How was Jesus' attitude toward women unexpected among the Jews? Why was he criticized and why did he treat women as he did? Luke 7:36-50.
2. In Luke 9:1-5, Jesus sent the 12 Apostles out to heal the sick. Why did Jesus instruct them to take nothing with them—no spending money or food; not even an extra coat? Is there any lesson or application here for modern Christians?

Notes and Commentary

Old Testament

Deuteronomy describes a system for dealing with the poor and others in need. How does the Israelite's system compare with modern notions on this matter? Would the Israelite's system work if implemented in our modern society? See Table 1 on page 3.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 (WEBME). [28] At the end of every three years you shall bring all the tithe of your increase in the same

year, and shall store it within your gates. [29] The Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the foreigner living among you, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Deuteronomy 15:1-11 (WEBME). [1] At the end of every seven years, you shall cancel debts. [2] This is the way it shall be done: every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor. He shall not require payment from his neighbor and his brother; because the LORD's release has been proclaimed. [3] Of a foreigner you may require it; but whatever of yours is with your brother, your hand shall release. [4] However there shall be no poor with you (for the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it) [5] if only you diligently listen to the LORD your God's voice, to observe to do all this commandment which I command you this day. [6] For the LORD your God will bless you, as he promised you. You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. You will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. [7] If a poor man, one of your brothers, is with you within any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother; [8] but you shall surely open your hand to him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need, which he lacks. [9] Beware that there not be a base thought in your heart, saying, "The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand"; and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cry to the LORD against you, and it be sin to you. [10] You shall surely give, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him; because that for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work, and in all that you put your hand to. [11] For the poor will never cease out of the land. Therefore I command you to surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor, in your land.

In Deuteronomy 7:1-2, God tells the Israelites to utterly destroy certain nations as they take their land. Then, in Deuteronomy 7:3-4, He instructs them not to permit their children to intermarry with the people of those nations. If they had "utterly destroyed" these nations,

Bible Rule	Modern American Rule
Tithe to Levites required	Tithe voluntary to Church
Second tithe, every third year for charity	Charities partially take care of the poor; Mandatory taxes to civil authorities funds government welfare / assistance. Note that under both systems the provision of the poor should be voluntary, but is largely assured by mandatory contributions—to the religious authorities in the Old Testament via the tithe; and via taxes to the civil authorities in America.
Jubilee: property returned to original owner every 50 years; mortgages cancelled.	Bankruptcy cancels some debts, but generally does not forgive mortgages or restore land.
Debts of Hebrews forgiven every 7 years. Foreigners' debts remained.	Statute of limitations vary, but generally run 4 or 5 years after the breach of an obligation for a debt. Residents and foreigners treated the same. Bankruptcy dissolves some debts.
Freely lend to the needy, without regard to the 7th year of remission.	Lend and charge interest. Sue the debtor if non-payment
Hebrew slaves freed every seven years.	Slavery officially abolished, but some employers apparently aren't aware of this fact.

Table 1: Debt forgiveness

who was left to marry? And do these verses apply to modern Christians—that is, should we interpret God’s instructions to mean we should not marry people from other nations? At the time God gave these instructions, they applied to people who followed gods other than “Yahweh” (“Jehovah”), the God of the Israelites. That is, God referred to the other nations by name, because they necessarily all believed in false Gods. Contrast this situation to modern nations, which typically have believers of many different faiths, including those who follow the one true God of Jesus Christ.

God made this rule because of the real danger that His people would follow the false gods of other nations if the Israelites mingled with those nations:

Deuteronomy 7:4 (WEBME). *“For he will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods. So the LORD’s anger would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.”*

[Adam Clarke’s 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible] The heart being naturally inclined to evil, there is more likelihood that the idolatrous wife should draw aside the believing husband, than that the believing husband should be able to bring over his idolatrous wife to the true faith.

[The New John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible] Whosoever marries with them, it is as if he married with their idols: and this law, according to the Jewish writers,¹ is binding with respect to other nations besides the seven; and whosoever marries any Heathen, of whatsoever nation, is to be beaten.

[Jamieson Fausset Brown Bible Commentary] This relentless doom of extermination which God denounced against those tribes of Canaan cannot be reconciled with the attributes of the divine character, except on the assumption that their gross idolatry and enormous wickedness left no reasonable hope of their repentance and amendment. If they were to be swept away like the antediluvians or the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as incorrigible sinners who had filled up the measure of their iniquities, it mattered not to them in what way the judgment was inflicted; and God, as the Sovereign Disposer, had a right to employ any instruments that pleased Him for executing His judgments. Some

¹Maimon. Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 12. sect. 1.

think that they were to be exterminated as unprincipled usurpers of a country which God had assigned to the posterity of Eber and which had been occupied ages before by wandering shepherds of that race, till, on the migration of Jacob's family into Egypt through the pressure of famine, the Canaanites overspread the whole land, though they had no legitimate claim to it, and endeavored to retain possession of it by force. In this view their expulsion was just and proper. The strict prohibition against contracting any alliances with such infamous idolaters was a prudential rule, founded on the experience that "evil communications corrupt good manners" [1Co 15:33], and its importance or necessity was attested by the unhappy examples of Solomon and others in the subsequent history of Israel.

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible]

Here is a strict caution against all friendship and fellowship with idols and idolaters. Those who are in communion with God, must have no communication with the unfruitful works of darkness. Limiting the orders to destroy, to the nations here mentioned, plainly shows that after ages were not to draw this into a precedent. A proper understanding of the evil of sin, and of the mystery of a crucified Saviour, will enable us to perceive the justice of God in all his punishments, temporal and eternal. We must deal decidedly with our lusts that war against our souls; let us not show them any mercy, but mortify, and crucify, and utterly destroy them. Thousands in the world that now is, have been undone by ungodly marriages; for there is more likelihood that the good will be perverted, than that the bad will be converted. Those who, in choosing yoke-fellows, keep not within the bounds of a profession of religion, cannot promise themselves helps meet for them.

New Testament

How was Jesus' attitude toward women unexpected among the Jews?

Why was he criticized and why did he treat women as he did?

Luke 7:36-50 (WEB)

[36] One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered

into the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table. [37] Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that he was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. [38] Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. [39] Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what kind of woman this is who touches him, that she is a sinner." [40] Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

He said, "Teacher, say on." [41] "A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. [42] When they couldn't pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?" [43] Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most."

He said to him, "You have judged correctly." [44] Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. [45] You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." [48] He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." [49] Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" [50] He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Luke 8:1-3

[1] Soon afterwards, he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God. With him were the twelve, [2] and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; [3] and Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others; who served them from their possessions.

Also, see in next week's reading, Luke 10:38-41 – the story of Mary and Martha.

[Barnes²] Verse 7:37. This woman, it seems, was known to be a sinner - perhaps an abandoned woman or a prostitute. It is certain that she had much to be forgiven, and she had probably passed her life in crime.

Wherefore I say unto thee - As the result of this, or because she has done this; meaning by this that she had given evidence that her sins had been forgiven. The inquiry with Simon was whether it was proper for Jesus to touch her or to allow her to touch him, because she was such a sinner, Luke 7:39. Jesus said, in substance, to Simon, Grant that she has been as great a sinner as you affirm, and even grant that if she had continued so it might be improper to suffer her to touch me, yet her conduct shows that her sins have been forgiven. She has evinced so much love for me as to show that she is no longer such a sinner as you suppose, and it is not, therefore, improper that she should be suffered to come near me.

[Clarke³] Verse 37. A woman-which was a sinner. Many suppose that this woman had been a notorious public prostitute; but this is taking the subject by the very worst handle. My own opinion is, that she had been a mere heathen who dwelt in this city, (probably Capernaum,) who, through the ministry of Christ, had been before this converted to God, and came now to give this public testimony of her gratitude to her gracious deliverer from the darkness and guilt of sin.

[Kretzmann⁴] The host had watched the entire proceeding with ill-concealed disgust. The very thought of Jesus' being touched by such a notorious character made him shudder. And therefore he passed the verdict in his heart that Jesus could not be a prophet. The tears of the woman were disagreeable to him, and the smell of the ointment filled him with loathing... The fact that her many grievous trespasses had found forgiveness in the sight of Christ and God filled her heart with joyful love, which she was constrained to show by her outward behavior. The forgiveness was not the result of the love, but the love, followed and flowed out of the forgiveness, just as the sun does not shine because it is light outside, but it is light because the sun shines.

[MHCC⁵] None can truly perceive how precious Christ is, and the glory of the gospel, except the broken-hearted. But while they feel they cannot enough express self-abhorrence on account of sin, and admiration of his mercy, the self-sufficient will be disgusted, because the gospel encourages such repenting sinners.

²Barnes' Notes

³Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

⁴Popular Commentary of the Bible by Paul E. Kretzmann, M.A., Ph.D., B.D.

⁵Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible

The Pharisee, instead of rejoicing in the tokens of the woman's repentance, confined his thoughts to her former bad character. But without free forgiveness none of us can escape the wrath to come; this our gracious Saviour has purchased with his blood, that he may freely bestow it on every one that believes in him. Christ, by a parable, forced Simon to acknowledge that the greater sinner this woman had been, the greater love she ought to show to Him when her sins were pardoned.

In Luke 9:1-5, Jesus sent the 12 Apostles out to heal the sick. Why did Jesus instruct them to take nothing with them—no spending money or food; not even an extra coat? Is there any lesson or application here for modern Christians?⁶

[Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible] They must depend upon Providence, and the kindness of their friends, to furnish them with what was convenient for them. They must not take with them either bread or money, and yet believe they should not want. Christ would not have his disciples shy of receiving the kindnesses of their friends, but rather to expect them. Yet St. Paul saw cause not to go by this rule, when he laboured with his hands rather than be burdensome.

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible] Christ sent his twelve disciples abroad, who by this time were able to teach others what they had received from the Lord. They must not be anxious to commend themselves to people's esteem by outward appearance. They must go as they were. The Lord Jesus is the fountain of power and authority, to whom all creatures must, in one way or another, be subject; and if he goes with the word of his ministers in power, to deliver sinners from Satan's bondage, they may be sure that he will care for their wants.

[The Fourfold Gospel and Commentary on Acts of Apostles]⁷ And he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, etc. The prohibition is against securing these things before starting, and at their own expense. It is not that they

⁶Cf. the 70 (or 72) also sent out on a similar mission in Luke 10:1-12.

⁷Referring to the similar story in Mark 6:7-11

would have no need for the articles mentioned, but that "the laborer is worthy of his food" (Matthew 10:10), and they were to depend on the people for whose benefit they labored, to furnish what they might need. This passage is alluded to by Paul (1 Cor 9:14). To rightly understand this prohibition we must remember that the apostles were to make but a brief tour of a few weeks, and that it was among their own countrymen, among a people habitually given to hospitality; moreover, that the apostles were imbued with powers which would win for them the respect of the religious and the gratitude of the well-to-do. **The special and temporary commission was, therefore, never intended as a rule under which we are to act in preaching the gospel in other ages and in other lands.**

Random Quotes

"It matters not whether you win or lose; what matters is whether I win or lose."

— Weinberg

"It's Wednesday somewhere in the world."

— Mike Holderfield, at Saturday Morning Christian Men's Breakfast, Davie, Florida, March 13, 2010.

"Lots of folks confuse bad management with destiny."

— Kin Hubbard (1868 – 1930)

Notes:

© Tom Truex 2014, Davie, FL