

## Put the Evil Away

by John Isaac Edwards

The putting away of evil is often stressed in the fifth book of Moses. Let's take a look at some examples:

***Those Enticing You to Turn Away from the Lord.*** In Deuteronomy 13, Moses warns Israel of a prophet arising, performing a miracle and enticing them to "...go after other gods..." (vv. 1-2). Israel was instructed not to hearken unto the words of that prophet, remain loyal to God and put that prophet to death, "...So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee" (vv. 3-5). If you were an Israelite, even your straying family members were to be put to death, with your hand being "...first upon him to put him to death..." (vv. 6-10). This would remove the evil, the evil influence, and also serve as a deterrent to evil as verse 11 says, "And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you."

***Any Transgressing Man or Woman.*** When it was certain that abomination had been committed in Israel, in transgressing the covenant of God, at the mouth of two or three witnesses the evil doer was to be put to death. The hands of the witnesses were to be first upon him. What was the purpose of such? "...So thou shalt put the evil away from among you" (Deuteronomy 17:2-7).

***The Presumptuous Man.*** "And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously" (Deuteronomy 17:12-13). To do presumptuously is to fail to observe the limits of what is permitted. For example, when a prophet spoke presumptuously, he spoke contrary to the authority of the Lord (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). Such evil was to be put away!

***A False Witness.*** The law said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness..." (Exodus 20:16). If a false witness testified falsely against his brother, "Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you" (Deuteronomy 19:16-20).

***A Stubborn and Rebellious Son.*** Moses said, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and

his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city...And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear” (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). In giving the Ten Commandments, God declared, “Honour thy father and thy mother...” (Exodus 20:12). The dishonour of not hearkening to one’s parents was an evil and was to be put away!

**One Who Played the Whore.** If a man found his wife not to be a maid and tokens of virginity were not found for the damsel, “Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father’s house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you” (Deuteronomy 22:13-21).

**A Man Found Lying With a Married Woman and the Woman.** Deuteronomy 22:22 says, “If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.”

**A Virgin Damsel and a Man Who Lies with Her.** Again it is written, “If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour’s wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you” (Deuteronomy 22:23-24).

**A Man Found Stealing.** “If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you” (Deuteronomy 24:7).

There was to be no association of the Lord’s people with evil around them. They were taught not to “bow down to their gods”, “make no covenant with them”, and “They shall not dwell in thy land...” (Exodus 23:24-33). Nor was there to be any toleration of evil among them as this study shows. As evil was to be put away then, there is to be a putting away of evil today (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

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