

Deuteronomy 19:14-21

The False Witness

June 27, 2021

¹⁴“You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

¹⁵“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. ¹⁶If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. ¹⁸And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁰And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. ²¹Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

When we get to verse 16, we will come across a word used only once before, and one which will only be seen eight times in total in the Bible. It is translated as “wrongdoing,” but it signifies a turning aside or an apostasy.

We will go over that verse in detail when we get there, and so there’s no need to rush into all of the detail of it now. But because we are New Testament believers who accept the words of the New Testament as inspired, and because almost everyone who accepts the New Testament is inspired is at least aware of the doctrine of the rapture, this is a good time to consider a portion of that particular doctrine.

This is especially so because the rapture – whether you accept the premise of it or not – is an exciting doctrine to debate. Those who dismiss it, love to debate why they do. Those who accept it, love to debate why they do.

And, unlike most other doctrines in the Bible, the rapture is one of the rare doctrines where almost every person is a specialist on it. People may not have a single thought to express on soteriology, hamartiology, anthropology, ecclesiology, and so on, but it seems like everyone is an expert on eschatology – especially that related to the rapture.

But... not everyone is right. One point of the rapture which is mangled and abused by people who want to justify their position on a pre-tribulation rapture will use the words of Paul from 2 Thessalonians 2 to justify their position. That is found in our text verse today...

Text Verse: *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4*

In his words, Paul uses the term “falling away.” That is from the Greek word apostasia, meaning a defection, apostasy, revolt, etc. It is used only twice. Once it is found in Acts 21:21

and then again in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. In order to justify a pretribulation rapture, “scholars” abuse the word *apostasia* out of its intended context.

In doing so, they can then say, “See, this proves a pre-tribulation rapture.” First, no – no it doesn’t. Secondly, there is no need to use this to prove a pre-tribulation rapture. The doctrine stands on its own from the exact same chapter of 2 Thessalonians.

Paul was not speaking of a rapture. He was speaking of exactly what the word means, a departure from sound doctrine. As noted, the word is elsewhere found in Acts 21 –

“And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.’”

Acts 21:20, 21

The word translated there as “forsake” is the same word, *apostasia*. This is a word that finds its roots in the passage we are looking at today in Deuteronomy. It is not an etymological root, but a root based on the idea of apostasy.

It is based on the word I mentioned earlier from verse 16, translated as “wrongdoing.” It is the Hebrew word *sarah*. It signifies the same thing as the Greek *apostasia* – apostasy. It is derived from the Hebrew word *sur* – to turn aside.

It is found in Deuteronomy 13:5 & 19:16; Isaiah 1:5, 14:6, 31:6, and 59:13; and in Jeremiah 28:16 and 29:32. With the exception of Isaiah 14:6, each of these refers to a turning away from the law or a turning away from the Lord. Even in Isaiah 14, it gives the sense of non-withdrawal.

Paul, a trained Pharisee, certainly had this idea on his mind when he wrote of the turning away from, or departure from, the truth of the word, and what is to be considered proper doctrine in established religion.

Like Acts 21, it is turning from set doctrine that is being referred to by Paul in 2 Thessalonians. Although this seemingly has nothing to do with the subject matter for the passage today, the passage today has something to do with the subject matter Paul was speaking of.

Let us not attempt to twist words to fit our theology. Rather, let us allow proper theology to mold us into sound, reasonable, and responsible believers who apply the word in its intended way. In this, we will remain in the theological sweet spot at all times.

Such truths as properly evaluating words in Scripture are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Neighbor's Border (verse 14)

¹⁴ "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark,

The Hebrew conveys the same idea, but is less definite, saying, "You shall not remove the border of your neighbor." Obviously, it means "landmark," but it signifies a change in the border. In this, a new verb is introduced, *nasag*, meaning to depart away, remove, take hold, etc. Five of its nine uses will be in relation to this precept now, the removing of a border.

Before going on, the context of the previous passage should be remembered. In the previous thirteen verses, it spoke of the cities of refuge, set up to protect the life of the manslayer who killed in innocence.

At first, it's hard to think of why Moses would suddenly jump to an entirely different and unrelated subject, but such isn't the case. The general consensus of scholars is reflected in the words of Albert Barnes. He says –

"As a man's life is to be held sacred, so are his means of livelihood; and in this connection a prohibition is inserted against removing a neighbor's landmark." Albert Barnes

The idea here is that of theft, as is defined in the eighth commandment. However, that obviously occurs because of a violation of the tenth commandment, that of coveting. Someone sees something that is not his, he covets it, and then he takes action to steal it.

In this, he then deprives the livelihood of the person. One thing follows after another. Thus, there is no unexplained leap from murder to the removing of a boundary. It is a logical progression of thought.

So serious of an infraction is this, that it calls for a direct curse upon the person who would do it –

"'Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.'
And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'" Deuteronomy 27:17

However, this is not merely a precept of the Mosaic Law that has no sense of moral importance outside of the law. Rather, Job 24 refers to this exact precept, placing it alongside theft as well –

“Some remove landmarks;
They seize flocks violently and feed on them;
³They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;
They take the widow’s ox as a pledge.” Job 24:2

Job was referring to those people who do not know the ways of the Almighty. In other words, even though he lived outside of the covenant people, he took it as an axiom that doing such a thing was an offense to the all-powerful Creator. Understanding this, Matthew Henry rightly states –

“It is the will of God that every one should know his own; and that means should be used to hinder the doing and suffering of wrong. This, without doubt, is a moral precept, and still binding. Let every man be content with his own lot, and be just to his neighbours in all things.”
Matthew Henry

The precept is referred to twice by Solomon in the proverbs. In Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10, the words are closely repeated –

“Do not remove the ancient landmark
Which your fathers have set.” Proverbs 22:28

“Do not remove the ancient landmark,
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;” Proverbs 23:10

Further, the sin of moving one’s border is so reprehensible to the Lord, that it is used as a comparative form of wickedness, meaning it is a seriously grave sin, when speaking of His coming wrath upon the land of Judah –

“The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like water.” Hosea 5:10

In this broad brushstroke of the precept, we can see that Matthew Henry is right. This is not simply a law of the Mosaic covenant, but it is a moral precept that the Lord will find deplorable in any time or place. The rights to property are, to Him, inviolable. Such a border is next said to be...

¹⁴ (con’t) **which the men of old have set,**

asher gebelu rishonim – “which have bordered the firsts.” Here Moses uses the verb form of the noun of the previous clause. He also uses the word rishon, meaning “former,” “first,” or “chief.” It generally speaks of an ancestor, elder, and so on.

In this case, it is surely speaking of the chief leaders who will originally set and define the borders of the land upon its acquisition. In a paraphrase, we could say, “your neighbor’s border that the leaders have bordered.”

The reason for giving this detail is because the people are not yet in the land. Moses is speaking of what will be, not what is. In saying, the first’s, or (as the NKJV translates it) the men of old, one might get the impression that it is referring to something already accomplished.

In their ever-ridiculous effort to appear scholarly, and to tear apart the word of God, the scholars at Cambridge do exactly this –

“For while the law betrays its date as subsequent to Israel’s settlement in the land—and with this agree the facts that there is no parallel in the earlier codes and that protests against removing boundary-stones appear in the prophets and later books.” Dolts at Cambridge

These incomprehensibly stupid comments demonstrate and explain why we have words to describe people lacking any brains at all. First, we have already cited Job, a man outside of the covenant people and who was – as most scholars agree – contemporary with the time of the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

Therefore, it is untrue that “there is no parallel in the earlier codes.” It is just not in the earlier codes of the books of Moses. Secondly, every code of the Law of Moses has to be introduced at some point. This code is now introduced.

It could not be in the earlier codes of Moses, because the earlier codes of Moses did not include them. It is an unreasonable argument to say that something is not original because it wasn’t referred to before. Using that logic, nothing could ever be considered original.

Thirdly, saying that such “protests against removing boundary-stones appear in the prophets and later books” is irrelevant to whether it is original here or not. There are things in the prophets and later books not mentioned in the laws set down by Moses, and there are things set down by Moses that are never again mentioned in Scripture, such as having a blue thread included in the tassel of a garment.

And so, fourthly, this precept does not betray “its date as subsequent to Israel’s settlement in the land.” Only in assuming that a later scribe is using the term rishon to mean “an ancestor” rather than a “chief leader” could they come to this erroneous conclusion.

But a later scribe, inserting this precept into the law, would have been careful to not make Moses appear as brainless as the scholars at Cambridge.

The words are original, they clearly mean that the people are to protect the future borders as defined by the leaders of Israel, and the legislation builds upon the moral precepts of the unseen God that were already understood by people of the world prior to the time of Moses, such as Job.

14 (con't) in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

The words speak both of surety and of warning. The land is Israel's inheritance (the words of the passage are in the singular), and they will inherit the land. However, it is the land that Yehovah is giving them to possess.

In other words, in violating the precepts laid down here, they can expect to be removed from the land of their inheritance. This is why the use of moving the borders as a comparative sin in Hosea 5 is so striking. The Lord doesn't say that they did this thing, but that their actions in other areas were as if they had done that thing.

Because of committing sins "like" removing the borders of one's neighbor, Judah would be uprooted from the land of their inheritance. The curse of Deuteronomy 27 was imputed to them for their actions.

Hey buddy... why are you plowing on my land?
What makes you think you can do this?
What part of the borders do you not understand?
Exactly what are you thinking? What did I miss?

Your land? Ha. This land belongs to me!
This is mine and I am plowing my own field
Look at the landmark, and then let me be
You'd better push off. You had better yield

* Hey, that stone belongs way over there!
You're no better than a murderer. Now beat it
* Ha! I'll dispatch you without a care
Your life means nothing to me. That I admit

One sin leads inevitably to another
The border mover has now killed a brother

II. Those Who Remain Shall Hear and Fear (verses 15-21)

¹⁵ **“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits;**

lo yaqum ed ekhad – “no shall rise witness one.” The word qum signifies to rise or stand. But the intent will be fully expressed in the next clause. For now, the same theme is again brought forth concerning the protection and sanctity of livelihood and life. This now implicitly deals with a violation of the ninth commandment, that of bearing false witness.

One witness is not sufficient to convict a person of a supposed crime. If it was, a single false witness could deprive another of either livelihood or life. Again, the violation of one command can, and often does, lead to the violation of another. And so, rather...

^{15 (con’t)} **by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.**

Here, Moses uses the same word, yaqum, that he did in the previous clause which is translated as “shall be established.”

One shall not stand (to establish).

By the mouth of two or three it shall be established.

The precept was already laid down for capital crimes. First, it was laid down for murder –

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty.” Numbers 35:30

It was next laid down for any other capital crime –

“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”
Deuteronomy 17:6

Now, it is made a general principle. Any accusation against another was only to be entertained by two or three witnesses. One is insufficient.

The reason is obviously because, as has been seen twice since we started, that a lesser infraction can – and often does – lead to a greater one. Therefore, the general precept is given for all infractions. As this is so, Moses continues with the proper way of handling a matter of false testimony...

16 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing,

The words here are understandable in almost any translation, and yet translations are so varied it's amazing to see the diversity of them. The word translated as false comes from a word signifying violence or wrong. It is translated as malicious, false, unrighteous, unjust, violent, and so on.

The word translated as wrongdoing signifies turning aside, defection, apostasy, and so on. It is variously translated as a crime, wrongdoing, evil, iniquity, lying, transgression, false accusation, perverted witness, apostasy, and so on.

The main idea is understandable in every translation. One person (Hebrew: ed khamas – a “witness of violence”) rises to establish something negative in another which is untrue, and which could then bring harm to that person who is obviously innocent of the charge being made. If such is the case...

17 then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD,

The precept here follows logically after that stated in Chapter 17 –

“If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.” Deuteronomy 17:8, 9

In other words, the words, “stand before the Lord,” are then explained in the next words...

17 (con't) before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

These are the Lord's representatives. To stand before the priests and judges is to stand before the Lord. It appears, then, that any and all cases involving assumed false testimony were to go to these officials to have the case decided.

The serious nature of such an infraction means that the judgment is not to be informally decided. Rather, it is considered of such great weight and importance that it requires their ruling. It is a ruling that occurs at the place where the Lord's name is, meaning the tabernacle or temple, or where the civil ruler is.

From there, their ruling is considered that of the Lord. As such, it is then to be adhered to accordingly once it is rendered. First, in order for that judgment to come about...

¹⁸ And the judges shall make careful inquiry,

The meaning is that the matter requires evidence, testimony, and contemplation. It is not a matter that will be established by simply listening to the false accuser and then the one accused. But it is a matter that requires a full investigation by people competently appointed to determine what has actually transpired.

This is not something that could be lightly decided upon because the two standing there before them would ostensibly know enough of, or be advised concerning, the law to understand they had a right to these measures.

Although the lawyer is only mentioned in the New Testament, the uses are almost all in the gospels, meaning someone who is learned in the law and under the dispensation of the law. Thus, it can be assumed that a group of people existed who were proficient enough in the law to understand and defend the rights of those under the law.

When this came about isn't stated in Scripture, but it is the law that sets the boundaries of the matter set forth now by Moses. As such, the investigation mandated here is to be conducted according to that same law. Once that is complete...

^{18 (con't)} and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,

v'hineh! ed sheqer ha'ed sheqer anah b'akhiv – “And behold! Witness false the witness false answers in his brother.” The matter is brought into a close and personal relationship by saying “in his brother.”

It is no longer just two people who are unrelated, but it is two people who are joined in Israel as brothers, making the crime most egregious in nature.

¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother;

Here a change takes place. The Hebrew goes from the singular to the only use of the plural in the entire passage with the words “you shall do.”

Moses has been speaking to Israel collectively throughout the entire chapter. But then he switches to each and every individual in the nation to highlight the importance of the matter.

Each member is jointly responsible for upholding the word of the Lord as determined by the priests and judges.

The change to the plural is supported by both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek translation, and yet – incredibly – Cambridge says, it is “either a clerical error or an instance of the possibility of a writer slipping from one form of address into the other. Read shalt thou.”

In other words, “The text is wrong, so it should be changed to the singular.” The arrogance of such a notion is beyond comprehension. Rather, the change is purposeful. It has a specific intent, and it is accentuated through this change. The witness is established by them to be false, and the people are to jointly treat him as such.

Here, the word translated as “thought” is zamam. It signifies to devise, purpose, plot, and so on. It is more than a passing thought, but a purposeful, intentional plan to harm another. He has done so, and his intent has been exposed – he is a false witness.

That is the decision to be rendered, not the sentence. The sentence is already given by Moses. Whatever the penalty would have been for the person who was falsely accused will be the punishment levied upon the false accuser.

If it was a fine, the fine would be levied upon him. If it was incarceration, that is what the false accuser would receive. And if it would have resulted in death, the false accuser was to be terminated.

Here is the irony of the matter. If only one witness came forward and spoke the truth concerning an offense against another, his testimony could not be used to convict the man who had actually done wrong.

However, if that one witness came forward and spoke a lie concerning an offense against another, that single false witness was considered sufficient to condemn the false witness.

Depending on the circumstances, the testimony of a false witness was thus capable of bearing a heavier penalty than that of a true witness. But that was for a good and valid purpose...

^{19 (con't)} **so you shall put away the evil from among you.**

u-biarta ha'ra miqirbekha – “and you shall consume the evil from your midst.” The word ba'ar comes from a root signifying “to burn.” Thus, it is as if Israel is being smelted through the process, burning off and purging away any impurities, and thus purifying the people of any evil.

And this purification process isn't just the removal of the offender. Not by a longshot. There is a greater purpose in dealing with the offender in this manner...

²⁰ And those who remain shall hear and fear,

This is one major purpose of punishment in society. When a person is punished, those who hear of it, if they are wise, will say, "I don't want that." In this, they will fear the law, they will fear the consequences of breaking the law, and they will fear those who administer the law.

In this, society is kept in check, and the people will then have no fear of those who would otherwise have no fear of the law. In this, the result is...

^{20 (con't)} and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.

This is the same general idea of what was said in Chapter 13. There, the person thought to draw the people away from the Lord to serve other gods. In that, they were to be taken out and stoned by all. The accuser first, and then by all the people –

"So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you."
Deuteronomy 13:11

The idea is that of having all the people come to an appreciation for what is right and just. The books of wisdom, in particular, reflect the importance of maintaining righteousness through upholding the law – whatever law that may be – that regulates the conduct of a nation's citizens. Solomon uses the same precept twice in Proverbs 28 to convey this notion –

"When the righteous rejoice, there is great glory;
But when the wicked arise, men hide themselves." Proverbs 28:12

"When the wicked arise, men hide themselves;
But when they perish, the righteous increase." Proverbs 28:28

The sense is that something has caused the wicked to arise. That is, invariably, a failure to maintain social order. This is the purpose of law. It is a developed structure in which people will properly conduct their affairs.

When the law is not upheld, then the wicked will arise. But when the wicked are taken out of the picture, the righteous remain and even increase. Solomon uses a similar precept in Ecclesiastes, showing that even if a sentence is handed down, it must be carried out with alacrity. If not, only more evil will result –

“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11

With such precepts clearly understood, and with the need for them to be upheld, Moses next says of such an offender...

²¹Your eye shall not pity:

This is certainly directed in two ways. The first is to the priests and judges who knew what a guilty sentence required. They were not to consider that when making such a sentence.

The second is to the people who would be called forward to assist in executing the matter, especially if it was a sentence of death. If called to stone the person, they were to accept it as the Lord’s judgment and to participate in the judgment of the Lord.

The law had spoken, the matter was established, and the sentence was to be carried out. Whatever the intended harm, that was to be the set forth sentence...

***^{21 (fin)} life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.**

This is known as the *lex talionis*, or “law of like-for-like.” It was first mentioned in Exodus 21 in regard to harming the baby in a mother’s womb –

“If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. ²³ But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Exodus 21:22-25

The precept was again brought forth in Leviticus 24 –

“If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.” Leviticus 24:19, 20

The *lex talionis* was later incorporated into other societies. Though seemingly harsh, this law is actually as much a curb on retribution as it is a means of punishing an offender.

No greater punishment was to be meted out than that which had been inflicted. Thus, the punisher was not unduly or overly punished. Of this precept, Adam Clarke rightly states –

“The operation of such a law as this must have been very salutary: if a man prized his own members, he would naturally avoid injuring those of others. It is a pity that this law were not still in force: it would certainly prevent many of those savage acts which now both disgrace and injure society. I speak this in reference to law generally, and the provision that should be made to prevent and punish ferocious and malevolent offenses. A Christian may always act on the plan of forgiving injuries; and where the public peace and safety may not be affected, he should do so; but if law did not make a provision for the safety of the community by enactment against the profligate, civil society would soon be destroyed.” Adam Clarke

It is a demonstrable fact that when a society does not fully punish offenders, they tend to come back even more violently than before. It is said that capital punishment is not an effective means of curbing violence. That is untrue. When a person is executed for his crime, he will never commit that, or any other, crime again.

When laws are not enforced, there will only be lawlessness. And when a society removes those who are sworn to uphold the law, that lawlessness will grow exponentially.

This has been validated time and again in the past year as those on the left have removed laws against criminals, removed the imposition of the penalty for violating standing laws – either in part or entirely – and who have removed those who are intended to enforce those laws.

In each and every one of these instances, the incidents of crime increase, the people who are affected by those crimes become more and more afraid for their own lives, and the general breakdown in society increases.

It is not uncompassionate to show no compassion in the right judgment of an offense and in the imposition of the penalty for that offense. The opposite is true.

Where justice is to be blind, and where punishment is to be meted out according to that justice, those responsible for such matters are demonstrating the greatest form of compassion for the society they serve. This is certain because the model is given in the laws for Israel as directed by the Lord.

As for the offender, especially for one condemned to death, it is the right and the responsibility of the judge in particular – and the society in general – to ensure the sentence is carried out. And yet, it should be the compassionate desire of both to ensure that the gospel of salvation is presented before it is. Even the person condemned to death can be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Unfortunately, one society after another has made, or is steadily making, it almost as much of a crime to preach the good news of redemption as it is to commit the most horrendous of crimes.

In fact, in the increasingly liberal west, crimes that were once considered intolerable are openly applauded, and the simple, pure preaching of salvation through faith in Christ is now almost a damnable offense unless it is secreted away in a closed building where the general public doesn't have to be burdened by its proclamation.

I am not a proponent of the term "Judeo Christian values." It is a remarkably inept way of speaking about the state of a society, and it elevates the moral state of unsaved Jews, and the teachings they profess, to the same level as that of Christianity.

Further, the term "Christianity" is so heavily abused by left-leaning churches, that it often rests on the same moral plane as that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The only appropriate way of exalting proper morals in a society is in relation to that of the state of believers – true believers. Thus, one could say, "biblical Christian values," and hope that those who adhere to those values are doing so in the proper context.

Those Jews who have the proper values are those Jews who have found their Messiah who was prophesied of in their own Scriptures. Those Christians who have proper values are those who have come to a saving knowledge of the Christ of the nations – Jesus.

They accept His word, they proclaim it in the proper context, and they understand that in Him alone is the full and final answer to the issues dealt with in Chapter 19 of Deuteronomy.

He is the place of refuge for the lost soul. He is the border which cannot be moved, and He is the One in whom there was nothing false, and yet who bore the penalty as if He were a presenter of false testimony or a murderer of men.

The very law He gave to Israel, through Moses, was brought to bear against Him. As it says in Mark –

Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. ⁵⁶For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. ⁵⁷Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ⁵⁸"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" ⁵⁹But not even then did their testimony agree.
Mark 14:55-59

Those who brought false testimony against Him, by the law they were trying Him under, should have then been given the penalty that they tried to bring upon Him. Instead, those who stood judging the Lord's case ignored that and found a supposed reason to convict Him which was actually the truth –

⁶¹Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

⁶²Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?”

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Mark 14:61-64

The Christ, the Son of the Blessed, stood before them and proclaimed who He was, not denying the truth. And yet, for this, they found Him guilty and worthy of death. Christ Jesus died under this law that He gave to Israel in order to redeem them from it, if they would just believe.

The record shows that most did not. But among them some did. For them, salvation is found. For the others, they have gone off to the place where they await the final sentence of condemnation.

The offer is given now to all people – to the Jew first and then the Gentile. There is salvation to be found in the Person of Jesus Christ, if we will just believe. The laws of nations are often not perfect, and even when they are perfectly just and fitting – as was Israel's law given through Moses – the law could not save the people.

However, the problem is not in the law, but in the people. It is their failure to uphold it that makes the work of Christ all the more glorious. He did, and then He died in fulfillment of it. Let us remember this, be grateful to God for what He has done, and reach out to Him for the grace that is now offered.

Closing Verse: *“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” John 8:46, 47*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 20:1-9 To avoid blood and guts galore, this is to be done (Conduct for War, Part I) (59th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The False Witness

“You shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark
Which the men of old have set, so to you I address
In your inheritance which you will inherit
In the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess

“One witness shall not rise against a man
Concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits
By the mouth of two or three witnesses
The matter shall be established, as the situation fits

If a false witness rises against any man
To testify against him of wrongdoing, such are his ways
Then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD
Before the priests and the judges who serve in those days

And the judges shall make careful inquiry
And indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified
-----falsely against his brother
Then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother
So you shall put away the evil from among you
-----him and not another

And those who remain shall hear and fear
And hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you
Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye
Tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot – so you shall do

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...