

בְּרֵאשִׁית הַיְּמִינִים



his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

בְּרֵאשִׁית הַיְּמִינִים
Christ has redeemed us from the curse for us (for it is written,

הַפְּתִיחַ פְּרִי עֵץ הַמָּוֶת הַזֶּה
Curse of the law having become a curse is everyone who hangs on a tree)

GALATIANS 3:13

1 August 2018
sketches
March 30, 2018

KALLERSON

Deuteronomy 21:18-23
He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God
August 1, 2021

¹⁸ "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, ¹⁹ then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. ²⁰ And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' ²¹ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

²² "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

There's something wrong with a conversation I had with Sergio when preparing the previous Deuteronomy 21 sermon. I will read you the conversation as it is both quite comical and also highly embarrassing. I copied the messages directly from the conversation. I needed help with the Hebrew on one of the verses, needing to make sure I was correct in an analysis I was putting together. The exchange reads:

C: "Hey, I got something for you. Do you have a Hebrew moment?"

S: "What's that mean?! As in, it'll take more than a moment?! Sure. Just answering emails"

C: I just have a question that I want to reconcile. Deut 21:15-17. Is there any way to determine if the wives are at the same time, or only one after another (the first wife is gone by divorce or death). Only one scholar comments, insisting that they are one after the other and not both alive at the same time. I think they are trying to inject their bias against polygamy into it. It seems (as far as I can tell) that the Hebrew is clear - two wives together. The other commentators seem to agree, but I just wonder how you read it.

S: I think the telling part is in v 16- the tense of the verbs. Sounds like both at the same time. I've read this and stumbled over it every time as I try to figure out why this is ok but today no polygamy. Not wanting to read my bias in but what you said in sermon yesterday was a brain squiggle."

C: Exactly how I read it. And it is not true that polygamy is not allowed today. It is only forbidden for elders and deacons. Implying that it is not disallowed for anyone else.

S: I guess I mean in our culture context, which is based on biblical law

C: Yes!

S: But maybe I presume too far. So then have to rethink the whole Muslim 4 wives thing...

C: It would make no sense to go to Africa and say, you cannot be a Christian unless you divorce your wives.

S: Absolutely not

C: The Lord accommodates cultural things like this. But the real question is... Why would anyone want the headache of two wives!

S: Of course I can't imagine the drama of more than one wife...

C: We think exactly alike ahahahaha

S: And I'm a woman!!

C: Is that Rhoda? Oh gee I thought I was talking to Sergio.

It got worse. I wasn't just not talking to Sergio or Rhoda. I was messaging a lady here in the church, not realizing I had hit the wrong contact...

Text Verse: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."* 1 Peter 1:3-5

Sometimes, we do something thinking that we are taking an action in order to resolve one issue when, in fact, we may be resolving a completely different issue. The verses today will show us this.

Israel thought they were taking care of an issue through the crucifixion of the Lord, when in fact the issue that was being taken care of through His cross was exactly the opposite of what they thought it was. For me and my messaging, it was embarrassing to say the least. For Israel, and for us, what occurred was glorious.

One thing is for sure, nothing God has done in and through Christ will ever cease to amaze us – even for eternal years. Marvelous things 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. He Will Not Obey Our Voice (verses 18-21)

¹⁸ **"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son**

ki yihyeh l'ish ben sorer u-moreh – "According to has to man son backsliding and rebellious." Here is a new word, and another that still should be defined. The first word, translated as "stubborn," is *sarar*. It is new to Scripture, and it signifies stubborn, backsliding, rebellious, etc. Robert Young translates it as "apostatizing."

It means "to turn away" in a moral sense. In the writings, psalms and prophets, it will be used again and again when referring to Israel the people.

The second word is *marah*. It signifies to be contentious, rebellious, provoking, and so on. It comes from a root which signifies, causatively, to make “bitter.” Thus, when one is rebellious, it will embitter the one who is rebelled against.

It has been used 8 times so far, always in relation to a person or the people of Israel. For example, it was used of both Aaron and Moses who embittered the Lord through disobedience. It has also been used several times about the entire congregation.

Like the other word, it will also be used in the writings, the psalms, and the prophets when referring to rebellious Israel. Through their actions, they embitter the Lord.

Taken together, however, the words as they are used here *sorer u-moreh*, become an idiomatic expression in Israel. They are used together in the Hebrew in the same manner elsewhere, such as in Psalm 78:8 and Jeremiah 5:23 –

“And may not be like their fathers,
A **stubborn and rebellious** generation,
A generation *that* did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.” Psalm 78:8

‘But this people has a **defiant and rebellious** heart;
They have revolted and departed.” Jeremiah 5:23

As a curious side note, the word *moreh* is noted in the margin of Matthew 5:22 in the Revised New Testament where the Greek word *more* is translated as “you fool” –

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘**You fool!**’ shall be in danger of hell fire.” Matthew 5:22

There, the Greek word is *móros* – a stupid or foolish person. The noun form is where the English word “moron” finds its origin. Though the words are not etymologically related, it appears that they carried basically the same idiomatic relation in both languages just as many similar words in various languages do for us today.

For now, and with these words understood, we see that this son both turns away from what is right, and he also embitters his parents in the process. He is a selfish malcontent that continuously chooses the rebellious path to his shame and to the grief of those who are responsible for him, as is next explicitly stated...

18 (con’t) **who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother,**

The Hebrew reads: *b'qol aviv u-b'qol imo* – “in voice father and in voice mother.” The “and” can mean “or” at times, but for now, just note that it says “and.”

As far as the clause, this explains the use of the word *marah*. Not only is he a deadbeat that does disgraceful things, maybe without his parents knowing it, but he purposefully ignores the words of his parents. He does what they tell him not to do, and he doesn't do what they tell him to do. What they say is shunned, even after correction. As it says...

18 (con't) **and *who*, when they have chastened him,**

In this, the word *yasar* is used. It signifies to discipline, chasten, admonish, and so on. It means to literally chastise with blows, or figuratively with words – as if for instruction.

This word has been used six times, all in relation to Israel. The first three were in Leviticus 26 where the Lord said he would *yasar*, or punish, Israel for their future disobediences. Further, it is especially noteworthy that a parallel is made to them and to this disobedient son twice so far –

“You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.” Deuteronomy 8:5

The word will continue to be used in relation to Israel in the writings of the prophets. And more, it is used in an emphatic form in Psalm 118:18 (a messianic Psalm) when referring to the chastening of the Lord upon His Messiah –

“The LORD has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.” Psalm 118:18

There the Hebrew reads: *yasor yiserani Yah* – “chastening has chastened me Yah.” The idea here in Deuteronomy is that the parents took the appropriate measures that should be taken. They have spoken to him, and he would not listen – to either parent – and they then disciplined him as a parent should, and nothing has helped. He is worthless and beyond any hope of redemption. Even after chastening he...

18 (con't) **will not heed them,**

v'lo yishma alehem – “and no will hear them.” The same word used in the second clause and translated there as “obey,” is again used here. It is *shama*. Here, it signifies to hear in the sense of hearkening to, and thus to obey. He purposefully ignores the words of his parents to his own shame and to their agony. What to do with such a rebellious punk? Moses next says...

19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him

v'taphesu bo aviv v'imo – “and shall take hold of him his father and his mother.” As you can see, verse 18 was translated as “father or mother,” but now they translate it as “father and mother.” In this, scholars then give an opinion on the meaning that may not be correct.

We will get to that in a few minutes. For now, the parents are to lay their hands upon Miscreant Mike and march him to those who will attend to the matter accordingly...

19 (con't) and bring him out to the elders

The elders are those referred to in verse 21:2. As we saw, they are those who represent the citizens. Generally, it is the elders who are responsible for proper conduct within the families, and for maintaining proper standards for all who issue from the tribe to which they belong. They have the age and experience to evaluate moral matters within the city, as it next says...

19 (con't) of his city,

The translation is correct. It is not “of the city,” as if it were any city. Rather, it is personal – *iro*, “of his city.” He lives there, and those who have seen him grow up know full well what kind of a loser he is. They will now be allowed to make the moral decision about his wayward disposition. Specifically, he is to go...

19 (con't) to the gate of his city.

Now the translation is incorrect. It says: *v'el shaar meqomo* – “and to gate his place.” The word *maqom* means “a standing.” It is the place where he lives and takes up the air, water, and food that are jointly used by all the people. The words are personal and reveal the intimacy of the situation.

The gate of the city, as has been seen, is the place where the affairs of the city are conducted, and matters of morality, legality, and so on are discussed, evaluated, judged, and tried. Once the parents have him there at the gates...

20 And they shall say to the elders of his city,

The word *iro*, or “his city,” is used again. It is a personal matter dealing with a person in the city in which he lives, and he is standing before the elders of his city. They are those who are morally responsible for heeding the words of his parents and taking action after hearing the parents' words, which are...

20 (con't) **'This son of ours**

benenu zeh – “son of ours, this.” You can almost see them standing there pointing at him, distancing themselves from him. They have had enough, and they now will be rid of him, because he...

20 (con't) **is stubborn and rebellious;**

Sins one and two: *sorer u-moreh* – “backsliding and rebellious.” It is an exact repeat of the words stated about him in verse 18. It is probable that if this was not yet an idiom, it became one at this time. The repetition from verse 18 now, as is to be proclaimed by the parents, would be long remembered and used by the people henceforth. Along with these sins...

20 (con't) **he will not obey our voice;**

The third sin: *enenu shomea b'qolenu* – “not hear our voice.” It is again a repeat of verse 18. He does what they tell him not to do, and he doesn't do what they tell him to do. What they say is shunned, even after correction. And more...

20 (con't) **he is a glutton and a drunkard.'**

The fourth and fifth sins: *zolel v'sove* – “glutton and drunkard.” The word *zalel*, or “glutton” is introduced. It signifies “to shake” as in the shaking of the wind, and also to quake. It figuratively means to be morally loose, and thus prodigal and worthless. It is used in Proverbs 28:7 when speaking of a worthless son –

‘Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son,
But a companion of **gluttons** shames his father.’ Proverbs 28:7

It is of note that Israel did not keep the law. The words of this Proverb implicitly speak against Israel. It is certainly what was on the Lord's mind in Luke 15, a proverb clearly referring to Israel –

“A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.” Luke 15:11-13

The second word, *sove*, is also introduced here. It signifies wine and thus abstractly it speaks of carousal, coming from *sava*, meaning to drink heavily. This word is found only four times, once here, twice in relation to Israel, and once in relation to Nineveh.

The first word, and the verb form of the second word are found together in Proverbs, and it is very probable that Solomon was considering this verse from Deuteronomy when he wrote out his thoughts there. This is especially likely considering that he refers to both the father and the mother in the passage –

“Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
²⁰ Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
²¹ For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.
²² Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when she is old.
²³ Buy the truth, and do not sell it,
Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.
²⁴ The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice,
And he who begets a wise child will delight in him.
²⁵ Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her who bore you rejoice.” Proverbs 23:19-25

As far as why I mentioned the use of “or” and “and” above is revealed here. In this, both parents are said to come and testify against the son. As such, scholars generally state the same thing as with Matthew Poole does –

“The consent of both father and mother is required to prevent the abuse of this law to cruelty. And it cannot reasonably be supposed that both would agree without manifest necessity, and the son’s abominable and incorrigible wickedness...” Matthew Poole

One must read into the text that both parents must agree to this. If there are two parents, this would certainly be the case. But if there was only one parent, his words would be just as valid. It is the law of two or three witnesses that testify to a crime. In the case of the parents, two is sufficient. Albert Barnes is right when he says –

“The formal accusation of parents against a child was to be received without inquiry, as being its own proof. Thus the just authority of the parents is recognized and effectually upheld...”

However, if there is only one parent, the purpose of bringing the son before the elders, and the reason it highlights in a personal way “his city” and the “gate of his place,” is because those elders would be fully aware of the conduct of the person, and they – or someone from the city – would be fully qualified to speak against him.

What is necessary is the voice of the parent – be it one or two. There is nothing in the law that speaks of stoning such a person apart from the witness of the parent who has the moral right to testify against the son. This is what is highlighted in the passage. If this has been established...

21 Then all the men of his city

Again, it is personal, *iro*, or “his city.” The people of the town would have been aware of this person’s conduct, the parents had brought him forward, no longer able to bear his conduct, and he is thus considered irredeemable. What is of note, however, is that the stoning is reserved for the men of the city.

In Leviticus 20:2, it says “the people” shall stone a person who gives his descendants to Molech. Five times in Leviticus and Numbers, it says “all the congregation.” However, here, only the men are mentioned who...

21 (con’t) shall stone him to death with stones;

Without any explanation of why the men are singled out, it simply says that it is they who are to stone him until he is dead. Stoning has already been used as the punishment for a blasphemer and a Sabbath-breaker. It is also noted as the prescribed punishment for other offenses as well.

The idea here is that if this son is rebellious against his own parents, he is – in essence – acting as a blasphemer. This is because the fifth commandment has been given, which is to honor one’s parent. In ignoring the command, he thus blasphemes God. And a blasphemer is to be stoned...

21 (con’t) so you shall put away the evil from among you,

This is the first purpose of capital punishment. Some punishments will drive the evil from a person. However, some forms of evil are so egregious that there is no remedy except to purge the source of the evil, meaning the person, from the society. If this is not accomplished, the society will eventually devolve into anarchy. However, when appropriate action is taken, a positive aspect will arise from it...

21 (con’t) and all Israel shall hear and fear.

This is the second purpose of capital punishment. This is unlike our nation today where a certain element is allowed to run amok and get away with anything – no matter how egregious it seems – thus resulting in even more wickedness.

Instead, when a person is executed for his crime, others will hear and be less likely to commit the same offense. Eventually, enough miscreants will be removed where the people will live in peace without them, and those who would dare to act accordingly will – instead – turn to a more productive lifestyle. This punishment is probably what Solomon was referring to –

“The eye that mocks his father,
And scorns obedience to his mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it.” Proverbs 30:17

A person who has been stoned outside the city for offenses against his parents will be left to rot where he lies. In such a state, the birds of the air will fill themselves with his otherwise worthless remains.

Stubborn and rebellious, deserving to be stoned
This is what should happen to this son
Can his sins ever be atoned?
Look at all the wickedness he has done!

He is a glutton and a drunkard and deserves to die
This is for certain, and it should come about
The parent has had enough, though He did try
But his life should end with stones... and in a shout

* The evil must be put away from us
We are Israel and we must be rid of this Man!
We must remove from the land this Jesus
We must purge Him away as soon as we can

II. You Shall Surely Bury Him That Day (Verses 22 & 23)

²² **“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death,**

v’ki yihyeh b’ish khet mishpat mavet – “And regarding is in man a sin, judgment of death.” The meaning is that a person is found to be worthy of death and is thus under a sentence of death. It is a capital crime that is referred to.

The words here follow immediately after stoning of the stubborn and rebellious son, and the connection is certainly intentional. It may be that what Moses will next say about such a person is to underscore the need to end punishment for even such a vile offender so that the

people do not assume that their punishment can exceed the boundaries of God's grace and mercy.

This must be the case based on what will be said in the next verse. For now, there is the case of one worthy of death and under a sentence of death. If this is the case...

²² (con't) **and he is put to death,**

This could include any form of execution. A person may be killed with the sword, stoned, and so on. The means of death is irrelevant to the passage. He came under a sentence of death, and he is executed. If this occurs...

²² (con't) **and you hang him on a tree,**

The word translated as "tree" is *ets*. It signifies wood. It can be a tree, gallows, or the like. In this, it is obvious that this is referring to publicly displaying him after death. It is a practice that had its own significance and was practiced in Israel. One such example is seen in the killing of five Amorite kings in Joshua 10 –

“And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. ²⁷ So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.” Joshua 10:26, 27

The idea here is that of victory over the foe. Joshua defeated the five Amorite kings, and they were hanged off of the land by men's hands, demonstrating that they no longer had any authority over the ground below them – “We have gained victory over the foe, and this is a public demonstration of it.”

The same is true with the person who is found to have committed sin and who is then under a judgment of death. The body is on public display that the sin of the man has been judged by men, he has been executed for it, and he has then been lifted up by men after the execution as a symbol of victory over the sin – “We have gained victory over the foe, and this is a public demonstration of it.” If such is the case...

²³ **his body shall not remain overnight on the tree,**

The word is *nebelah*, a *carcass*. As was seen in the account of the five Amorite kings, they were hung until evening, the start of a new day, and then they were taken down. This was to avoid violating this clause of the law.

As I said just a minute ago, what is being said here is stated so that the people do not assume that their punishment can exceed the boundaries of God's grace and mercy.

The person has died for his sin, the victory over it has been gained, and the day has revealed this. But how God deals with the person after that is wholly at His will. Before the sun went down, this was to be accomplished. As it next specifically says...

^{23 (con't)} **but you shall surely bury him that day,**

The words are emphatic: *ki qabor tiqberenu ba'yom ha'hu* – “For burying him you shall bury him in the day the that.” This makes it absolutely clear that the person is to be buried before the sun goes down, meaning before the start of the next day.

They were not to wait until sundown and then take the body down, but they were to have this accomplished before the next day began. And there is a reason for this...

^{23 (con't)} **so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance;**

In the Hebrew, this is actually the last clause of the verse. And it will be evaluated as such. The correct rendering is: “(for he that *is* hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance” (KJV). With that understood, we will first evaluate the words...

^{*23 (fin)} **for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.**

ki qilat Elohim talui – “for accursed of God he who *is* hanged.” The word is *qelalah*. It signifies cursed, but what does that mean? John Lange is correct when he says –

“the word contains the idea; to reject as detestable, wherefore the one cursed of God must be removed as soon as possible out of sight, from off the land given by God, which is defiled (morally, not physically, not even leuitically) by him.” John Lange

The person died in sin, a moral issue. It isn't the physical body that is being referred to, even though defilement does come to one who touches a dead body. And it is not a ceremonial defilement that is being referred to. It is a moral issue being addressed.

And more, this does not mean that the person who is hanged is accursed in the sense of not being saved. That would mean that any saved person who was hanged on a tree could not be saved. That is not the issue. What this means is that the person becomes a curse when hanged on a tree. Why?

Because sin is in all people. Anyone who is publicly displayed on a tree is dead. Death is the final penalty for sin. It is not the physical body, but the sin that is being focused on. *Sin* hangs on the tree and that sin is accursed of God. Albert Barnes explains it quite well –

“That is, he has forfeited his life to the law; for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them; and on his body, in the execution of the sentence of the law, the curse was considered as alighting; hence the necessity of removing the accursed thing out of sight.” Albert Barnes

The dead body is the evidence of the sin, the body is placed on display as a sign of victory over the sin, but then the sin is to be put away. The hanging of the body on the tree is the sign of being accursed by God and that is to be ended with the coming of the new day. With that, the final clause of the verse in the Hebrew can now be analyzed.

The body is to be taken down from the tree before sundown, “so that you do not defile the land.” The Hebrew says, “your earth,” not “the land.” As was seen in the first verse of the chapter, the word used both there and here is *adamah*.

It usually signifies the ground, soil, or earth, rather than the land as territory. It comes from the same root as *adam*, or man. Both come from the verb *adam*, implying redness. As we noted in verse 21:1, the thought of defiling the ground (not the land) with a body curiously brackets the contents of the entire chapter.

Such an ongoing public display of the sin would defile the ground because it would be an ongoing public display of the curse of God, thus defiling it.

With that understood, Moses closes out this incredible chapter with the usual formula that he has used again and again in Deuteronomy, saying it is that “which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.”

Israel was in bondage, and Israel was brought out. The Lord chose the land, promised it to the fathers, and is fulfilling His promise by bringing Israel in and giving them the land. The idea, then, is that just as the Lord has given it, so He can remove them from it.

The statement is both a note of ownership and a note of expected performance. Unfortunately, the record of Israel shows that they have consistently treated the land by the first notion, but they have rarely treated it by the latter. With the verses complete, we must next find what the Lord expects us to discover concerning them...

Look at Him there, hanging on that tree
He is cursed of God, just as the law does say

I'm so glad that it isn't me
That is hanging there on that cross today

I have done nothing so that I deserve to die
I am Israel, God's chosen son
He looks with favor on me, I don't even have to try
Yes, I am the favored one

But there... there upon that tree
There is the accursed of God for what He has done
What happens to Him has nothing to do with me
I am Israel, God's chosen son

III. Pictures of Christ

In this Chapter of Deuteronomy, there has been a high stress on typology pointing to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The first passage (1-9) pointed to His work cleansing the people from the guilt of innocent blood. As accomplished through the breaking of the neck of an unworked heifer.

The second passage (10-14) refers to the doctrine of eternal security for the believer who is brought out from the power of the devil. Such a person can never be sold back to his power again.

The third passage (15-17) looks to the *pi shnayim*, or firstborn's portion (the double portion) that came through Christ's work. Through His work, He redeemed to Himself those under law, both Jew and Gentile – be it the Mosaic Law or the general law of sin.

In our verses today, we first came to the fourth passage (18-21) which revealed the penalty for the disobedient son who would not listen to his father or mother. As we saw, the words used in those verses have been, and continue on throughout Scripture to be, applied to Israel, God's disobedient son.

In the fifth passage (22 & 23), which is intimately connected with the fourth passage, a note concerning hanging a person on a tree was presented, telling the reader that such a person is accursed of God. With those two final thoughts in mind, we can ask, "How is God glorified?" And we can answer: "It is by demonstrating His works in, through, and for His people." In John 9, we read –

"Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'

³ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’” John 9:1-5

Jesus came to do the works of God. One of those works was to take upon Himself the punishment that His own people deserved for their stubborn and rebellious nature before God, their Father. As we noted, the words translated as “stubborn” and “rebellious” in verse 18 are used again and again of Israel – the people under the law.

The word “rebellious” was even used of Moses and Aaron who represent the law. Explicitly, sin is an issue that must be dealt with. But what is implicit is that the law is the main issue that must be dealt with. As Paul says, “by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Israel is under law, they violate the law even to the point of being stubborn and rebellious, and thus they deserve the penalty of stoning levied upon such a son. But before that, they were chastened in order to correct them. It is a chastening that Israel did not heed, just as the disobedient son did not heed.

As we saw, the word translated as “chastening” was used of them time and again, but it did not produce proper conduct, just as it did not in the case of the rebellious son. However, in their place, God chastened Christ, as we saw in 118th Psalm, a messianic psalm.

Because of this, Israel deserved the penalty of the disobedient son – stoning to death. However, they have been spared that penalty because Another took their place. The account said that the parents were to take their disobedient son before the elders and to the gates (the place of judgment) of the city. Christ fulfilled that –

“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. ⁵⁹ Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death.” Matthew 26:57-59

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.”
John 19:13

As I noted, there was a stress on the fact that when speaking of the disobedient son, it repeated the word *iro*, or “his city.” This becomes a veiled reference to the deity of Christ, as is noted in Matthew 5, where Christ speaks of the Lord –

“But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”
Matthew 5:34, 35

After that, and when he is brought to the place of judgment, the parents state the following:

- 1) “This son of ours,” a term applied to Israel by the Lord (e.g., Exodus 4:22);
- 2) is “stubborn and rebellious,” both words – as we have already seen – commonly applied to Israel by the Lord;
- 3) “he will not obey our voice,” words spoken about Israel so many times it isn’t worth the effort to count;
- 4) “he is a glutton and a drunkard,” words which certainly applied to Israel, and yet a term directly applied by Israel to the Lord –

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ But wisdom is justified by all her children.” Luke 7:33-35

In such a state, a state that applied to Israel, and which the Lord assumed in their place, such a Son was to be taken out and stoned. The way this came about was to accuse Him of blasphemy. The same penalty for being a stubborn and rebellious son (Israel) is given for one accused of blasphemy –

“And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death.” Leviticus 24:16

And this is exactly what the leaders of Israel accused Him of –

“Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What do you think?’

They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’” Matthew 26:65, 66

However, because they, Israel at the time of Jesus, were not allowed to execute their wrongdoers, the words of the final two verses are given – that of hanging a person. This is seen in John’s gospel. First, the note of why He is not stoned –

“Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,’³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.” John 18:31, 32

And next, the formal charge once again, supposed blasphemy –

“The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’” John 19:7

The deserved penalty of stoning a stubborn and rebellious son, Israel, was imputed to Christ. As we saw earlier, what is necessary is the voice of the parent – be it one or two. There is nothing in the law that speaks of stoning such a person apart from the witness of the parent who has the moral right to testify against the son.

The Father witnessed against Israel, his son, through the prophets. The law, as a mother, witnessed against Israel as well, a precept implied in Solomon’s words of Proverbs 6:20 (and elsewhere) –

“My son, keep your father’s command,
And do not forsake the law [**torah, fem. noun**] of your mother.”

But God graciously substituted Christ Jesus in their place. As stoning could not take place, the Lord was crucified on a tree.

Hence, seeing this in advance, the Lord placed these final verses into this chapter in order to complete the narrative of what Christ has done for His people. Christ was hung, but according to the law, His body had to be taken down before sunset.

Though He was crucified by Romans who were not bound to this precept, the Lord foresaw that day and spoke these words through Moses now. Of this, in relation to Christ’s cross, John says –

“Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” John 19:31

The Sabbath, meaning Saturday which began at sundown, was nearing. In order to ensure these men did not remain on the cross, their deaths were to be expedited. When they came to Christ, however, He had already died. Thus, all were removed before the coming of the new day so that the land would not be defiled.

But this defilement was not because of Christ's sin! Rather, it was for the sin of Israel and, indeed, the whole world –

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

Paul explicitly states and explains this in Galatians 3 by referencing this exact passage from Deuteronomy –

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:13, 14

The Jews, understanding the law, did not want the bodies of those crucified to remain on the cross and thus defile the land, especially over the Sabbath and during the feast. Little did they know that the curse of sin attached to the body of Christ was theirs, not His.

As I said twice, and now amend and repeat for the picture to be understood, what Moses wrote out was to underscore the need to end punishment for even such a vile offender, Israel, so that they would not assume that *their punishment of Christ could exceed the boundaries of God's grace and mercy... toward them.*

Of this act of being hung on a tree, Matthew Henry says –

“Those who see a man thus hanging between heaven and earth, will conclude him abandoned of both, and unworthy of either.”

Israel stood looking at their own sin when they beheld the crucified Christ. It is they who were abandoned of heaven and earth, and it is they who were unworthy of either. And yet, Christ did what He did for them... and for you, and for me.

As we saw, the first and last verses of the chapter speak of defilement of the *adamah*, or earth, because of death. The death is the result of sin, and the sin is the result of the law. It is from the *adamah*, or earth, that Adam was fashioned. Thus, if the earth is defiled, those who are from the earth are defiled.

What we need is a new birth, from a heavenly Source, in order to be cleansed of our defilement. That is what Christ came to do, and that is what the gospel of Jesus Christ conveys to us.

He accomplished this and now offers, to any who will simply receive what He has done, the gift of eternal life. Let us be wise and let us receive that wondrous gift. In this, we will put behind us the defiled earth and partake of that incorruptible and undefiled inheritance that Peter spoke of in our text verse today. The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

Sometimes I imagine
that You came Lord,
so many gathered
to hear your voice,
and I am frozen,
and standing still.
How can that be
my King came for me?

And I am still
frozen in awe,
filled to a brim
with Your precious love.
I can't comprehend.
I fall at Your feet.
How can that be Lord,
You came for me?

I fall on the ground,
my heart pounding hard,
I'm overwhelmed
by You at my sight.
I'm sobbing and shaking
soaked in my tears.
How can that be
my Lord came for me?

On that old tree
long time ago
You took my sins
to save my soul.
You suffered and died
that I can be freed
to live my true life
when You'll come for me. Izabela Bednara

Closing Verse: *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— ²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”*
Acts 2:22-24

Next Week: Deuteronomy 22:1-12 *Be sure to watch your ways...* (That You May Prolong Your Days) (64th 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.

He Who Is Hanged Is Accursed of God

“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son
Who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother

And who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them
Bad news is coming to him, O brother

Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him
And bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city
And they shall say to the elders of his city
'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; it truly is a pity

He will not obey our voice
He is a glutton and a drunkard, his life choice

Then all the men of his city
Shall stone him to death with stones, O my dear!
So you shall put away the evil from among you
And all Israel shall hear and fear

"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death
And he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree
His body shall not remain overnight on the tree
But you shall surely him that day bury

So that you do not defile the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
-----the land on which you trod
As an inheritance, please understand
For he who is hanged is accursed of God

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...