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Deuteronomy 25:1-10

A Brother in Israel

September 26, 2021

"If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, ² then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. ³ Forty blows he may give him and no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.

⁴ "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.

⁵ "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. ⁶ And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. ⁷ But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' ⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

When I started typing this sermon on Monday morning, I had the same thought I have every Monday – “How am I ever going to get anything out of this passage that will be edifying to the church?”

The first verses seem very “lawish,” and other than knowing that they are directly or indirectly referenced in the New Testament, I wasn't sure how doctrinally edifying they would be for you. The last six verses are obviously typologically anticipating something, but I had no idea what.

Eight plus hours later, I still had no idea. I had to sit and really try to think things through. Unfortunately, the phone rang – right on Monday when I wish people would leave me alone – and I lost 20 or 30 minutes of thought.

It was getting time to walk the dogs and so I did that. In coming in, I got back to thinking and eventually developed what I feel they are telling us. It is a lesson said many times already in various ways. And that should not be surprising. Paul explains this lesson many times and in various ways as well.

And yet... people still do not get it, and they keep trying to merit God's favor apart from what He has done in Christ. What a sad place to be! God does the work, God offers the reconciliation, and we keep trying to do better than what He has done. Indeed, what a sad place to be.

Text Verse: *“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”*

-Galatians 2:16

Along with some thoughts about the law and grace, a couple other rather incredible doctrines are seen in our ten verses today. Maybe some of you, hopefully all of you, know what imputation means. There is another similar, but lesser-known, subject that we will mention today as well, impartation.

Do you know the difference between imputation and impartation? Is the difference that substantial? If so, how and why? Trust me on this, people will write volumes about which they believe Paul is referring to at times in his writings.

Just a little bit off in one’s analysis, and all of a sudden you are heading down the completely wrong theological path. When that happens, everything else goes askew as well. We won’t go into any great detail on this, but it’s good to be aware of the difference, so pay heed.

The Bible is a wonderful treasure filled with the most precious of doctrines for the faithful student. So, pick it up and read it! Learn to love this beautiful masterpiece of God’s wisdom. Great, great 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.

Forty Blows He May Give Him (Verses 1-4)

¹“If there is a dispute between men,

The NKJV rightly places this first verse as conditional. Verse 1 is the condition, while verse 2 is the concluding matter based on the condition – In other words, “If this, then this.”

The word *riv*, or dispute, comes from a root signifying “to toss,” as in grappling. Two people are contending or quarreling over a matter as people do. If such is the case, and no remedy has been found, then the matter is elevated...

^{1 (con’t)} and they come to court,

v’nigesu el ha’mishpat – “and they come unto the judgment.” The idea here is that of seeking out a set and recognized tribunal for a decision. This would first be at the gates of the city where such matters were to be judged.

Wherever the case ultimately is decided though, the point is that there is a disagreement. Either both think they are right, or one knows that he is wrong, but he thinks he can effectively win the case. As in any such matter, to know you are wrong and to know that you could not win such a case, it would be pointless to go to the judges. Jesus speaks of such a situation in Matthew 5:25, 26 –

“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

Such is not the case here. Neither side will budge, and so the matter is taken to the judgment to be settled. This is so...

¹ (con't) **that *the judges* may judge them,**

u-shephatim – “and they have judged.” The condition of the first verse continues. The dispute was taken to the judges, and the judgment has been rendered upon them by the judges. When this occurs...

¹ (con't) **and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked,**

The translation is correct. The word *ha'tsadiq*, or “the righteous,” and the word *ha'rasha*, or “the wicked,” are terms referring to the state of the individuals in relation to the case. One is just in his case while the other is not. Charles Ellicott is thus right when he says –

“It should be noticed that *justify* is here used forensically, not meaning to make righteous, but *to treat as righteous.*” Charles Ellicott

It is what the Lord said in Exodus 23 concerning judgment –

“You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. ⁷ Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked.”
-Exodus 23:6, 7

This may be more clearly seen in the Proverbs –

“He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.” Proverbs 17:15

It is obvious from Solomon's words that he is speaking of treating a wicked man as righteous. Thus, it cannot mean "making righteous," even if the person who is justified deludes himself into believing this.

This is an important point for us to consider. In Christ, we are justified before God. We are "treated as righteous," but that does not mean that we are now righteous in and of ourselves, even if the arrogant Christian acts as if he is." Adam Clarke then rightly evaluates this in relation to Paul's words in his epistles –

"The word צדק-tsadak is used here precisely in the same sense in which St. Paul sometimes uses the corresponding word δικαιοω [dikaioó – to show to be righteous; declare righteous, C.G.], not to justify or make just, but to acquit, declare innocent, to remit punishment, or give reasons why such a one should not be punished; ... using the same word with St. Paul when he speaks of a sinner's justification, i. e., his acquittance from blame and punishment, because of the death of Christ in his stead." Adam Clarke

This highlights the difference between imputation and impartation. To be imputed righteousness means to ascribe as righteous. To be imparted righteousness means to bestow the quality of righteousness. The difference is worlds apart for the believer.

We are treated (imputed) as righteous by God because of what Christ has done, we are not righteous (imparted) in and of ourselves now because of Christ. Hence, we cannot look down on others because of our own righteousness. We can only pity them in relation to Christ and strive to bring to them what we have now been granted.

In such a case as is being evaluated now, whoever is decided in favor of the case is righteous while the one who lost the decision is unrighteous – in a legal, not necessarily a moral sense. Such is the case with humanity before God. When a decision is made for those in Christ, we are deemed legally righteous. When we are not in Christ, we are legally unrighteous.

As for the one not justified, in this case in Israel...

² then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten,

The Hebrew bears an idiom: *v'hayah im bin hakot ha'rasha* – "and it shall be if son of beating, the wicked." In other words, it is as if he is a son deserving of being beaten. In such a case, it shall be...

^{2 (con't)} that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence,

The Hebrew reads *l'phanav* – “to his face,” and thus before the face of the judge. The GNT incorrectly translates this as, “If the guilty one is sentenced to be beaten, the judge is to make him lie face downward and have him whipped.”

In other words, they take the words “to his face” as meaning, “with his face to the ground.” That is not the intent, even if that is what the man does. The words “to his face,” mean “before him,” or “in his presence.”

The judge was to personally watch over the beating to ensure that it was carried out as determined. Otherwise, he could be overbeaten, mistreated in how the beating was given, not punished enough, and so on. With it conducted before him, and because he was the one who made the judgment, it would be...

² (con't) **according to his guilt,**

kede rishato – “according to sufficiency of his wickedness.” In other words, enough to punish but no more and no less. One might say, “exactly as he deserves.”

² (con't) **with a certain number of blows.**

b'mispar – “in number.” This is the “sufficiency” of the previous clause. The number is to be in accord with his wrongdoing. However, the judge was to be limited in how much he determined what “in number” could be...

³ **Forty blows he may give him *and* no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these,**

The Hebrew is very precise, saying, “Forty blows he may give him, no he add lest he add, to beat him above these blows great.” In other words, anything beyond forty would be considered too great a punishment for any offense.

It obviously became an accepted rule in Israel to take away one blow as the maximum penalty in order to ensure the law was never violated. In other words, if the maximum of forty was the sentence, and the punisher miscounted, he would violate the law. Hence, the maximum number of thirty-nine was set to avoid this ever occurring.

Although this precept is not stated explicitly in Scripture, it is to be inferred from Paul’s words of 2 Corinthians 11:24, where he says, “From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.”

With this stated, and with the precept understood from the New Testament, we find hints of the work of Christ. Forty, according to Bullinger is the number associated –

“...with a period of probation, trial, and chastisement... It is the product of 5 and 8, and points to the action of grace (5), leading to and ending in revival and renewal (8).” EW Bullinger

This is obviously the case with the man being punished. He is chastised. The maximum number set by the law is grace, and it is intended to lead to his renewal within the community for justice served. The removal of one blow would then be the maximum punishment, leading to renewal.

And this is what the Bible reveals in the coming of Christ. The body of law, the Old Testament, is thirty-nine books. That leads to the fortieth book where Christ is introduced.

The law, with its provisions for reconciliation to God, is grace leading to revival and renewal in Christ. Thus, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, meaning the law, are as blows to Christ in His fulfillment of them.

God gave Him that, and no more, to complete His work. If one adds in the fortieth book which first reveals His completion of them, then He has perfectly fulfilled the period of probation, trial, and chastisement. It is a beautiful picture of God’s grace, leading to and ending in revival and renewal.

As far as the law itself for the disobedient man, any more than what the law prescribes would result in something quite negative...

³ (con’t) **and your brother be humiliated in your sight.**

v’niqlah akhikha l’enekha – “and dishonored your brother in your eyes.” The idea of calling him a “brother” here is that of shared humanity. This is a person and to beat him beyond a set measure would be comparable to treating him like an animal. It was not to be condoned.

Before going on, it needs to be noted that this precept of the law is not the punishment given to Christ during his Passion. The scourging He received was at the hands of Romans who were not bound to the precepts of the law. He would have been beaten relentlessly by them before He was led to the cross.

So, in a sense, Christ took much more of the humiliation spoken of here for His people than God would ever have allowed for them under their law. What God was willing to do for us in Christ goes far beyond that. Thank God for Jesus.

And more, it must be remembered when looking at the typology that Christ did no wrong. The wicked one in this passage is us, and yet Christ is the one who took the blows on our behalf. Our guilt; His punishment. With that, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. Thank God for Jesus.

With this matter now complete, Moses turns to a new precept...

4 “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out *the grain*.

lo takhsom sor b'disho – “No you shall muzzle ox in his treading.” Two new words are found here, *khasam*, to stop up or muzzle, and *dush*, meaning to tread or thresh.

A question arises as to why this is stated here at all. A friend of mine sent me an analysis of this verse quite some time ago from Justin Taylor of the Gospel Coalition. I saved that until arriving here. The title was, “Do Not Muzzle the Ox: Does Paul Quote Moses Out of Context?”

The reason this is an important matter to settle is because Paul does, in fact, quote this verse two times. In his quoting, he says –

“Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?” 1 Corinthians 9:8-12

“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”

-1 Timothy 5:17, 18

Paul says that this was written for our sakes. If this is so, then as the analysis notes, it brings up all kinds of questions. They give examples –

- Is Paul saying that Moses never meant this to be applied to literal oxen?
- Is he merely referring to the ultimate intention of the passage?
- Is he focusing on contemporary application rather than original meaning?
- Is he quoting this verse out of context?

Based on this, and in order to show that the law is still to be taken literally, and yet also to justify that Paul is right as well, Mr. Taylor goes into lengthy analysis of showing that this must be speaking of a borrower of an ox.

To simplify the entire article, my friend brought it down to its basics, and then he paraphrased the intent, saying –

In the case of an owned ox, it would be in the interest of the owner to have the ox eat some of the grain as it's threshing the floor — so that the ox stays healthy and well fed.

But in the case of a borrowed ox — the borrower might not care for the ox as much, and wants to have maximum grain yield. So, he might put a muzzle on the ox so that it does not eat his grain. But in such a case the ox might get weaker and will not be in a good condition. But the borrower wouldn't care because it's not his ox.”

As my friend neither agreed nor disagreed with the analysis, but simply sent it on, I am sure I won't offend him by disagreeing with it. The logic from that analysis is that all of the surrounding verses deal with human rights, and as this suddenly introduces the care of an ox, it doesn't fit. Therefore, Paul must be right.

As he is, then it must be speaking of the rights of the owner of the ox, and hence, the ox is owned by another. As such, the passage is still referring to human rights – meaning, taking care of the owner's property.

I disagree, and that does not logically follow. And, if it was the case, Moses would have identified it as a borrowed ox, just as the law speaks of such things elsewhere like in Exodus 22-

“And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good. ¹⁵ If its owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired, it came for its hire.” Exodus 22:14, 15

If one has to infer a precept in the law of Moses in this manner, then the law is not clear. But clarity of the law is the absolute intent for the people. We have seen that time and again. Things are both repeated and restated to ensure there is nothing vague or ambiguous in the law.

Having said that, the precept is set. It is for the protection of the ox. And yet, it is still a precept dealing with human rights, just not the rights of an owner of an ox that the law never refers to.

Rather, the reason it is placed here is because it adds importance to the law just stated in the previous verse. If an ox is to be tended to, even though it is an ox, how much more should a man not be degraded as if he were an animal by beating him beyond what is decent.

Understanding that, and then understanding the context of Paul's words, both the law as written, and what Paul says in the epistles, come into clarity of focus.

Paul takes an actual verse about an ox, a matter of law – but which is placed carefully after a passage about human dignity – and he then says that it is not the ox that God is concerned about, which is true. It is the state of the *brother of the previous verse* that He cares about. Paul then elevates the precept of the ox to that of human dignity in his epistles, exactly as the passage about the ox intends.

You shall beat Him with forty blows and no more
It is sufficient to the offense at hand
Anymore and everyone knows – 'forshore'
He will be dishonored more than I had planned

And you have done right by making it forty minus one
It is proper to not go beyond that, so I say
There are thirty-nine blows laid upon My Son
Thirty-nine books filled with debt that He would pay

And in the fortieth, there is now fellowship so sweet
The grace leading to revival and renewal is found
In Him, all that was necessary is now complete
In Him restoration with Me is found

II. To Raise Up a Name to His Brother (verses 5-10)

⁵ "If brothers dwell together,

The stipulation here does not necessarily mean "in the same house." This is evidenced from the same use of the term in Genesis 13:6 and 36:7 where it refers to dwelling together in the same land. The matter is one of what is reasonable concerning proximity. As such is the case...

^{5 (con't)} and one of them dies and has no son,

The translation is literally correct, son. But the passage is cited in the New Testament and there it refers to offspring –

“The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, ²⁴ saying: ‘Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁵ Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all the woman died also. ²⁸ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.’” Matthew 22:23-28

The son is the one to carry on the name of the father, but a provision was made in Numbers 27:1-11 for it to continue through daughters as well in a certain circumstance. Regardless of this, it is generally the son that carries the name of the father.

For now, the man died having no offspring, therefore...

^{5 (con’t)} **the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*;**

The word *zur*, or stranger, means anyone who is another. In other words, the brother has already been identified in the first clause, and thus anyone else is “another.” The focus is on this brother and the widow of his brother. In this case...

^{5 (con’t)} **her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife,**

Here is a new noun, *yavam*, meaning a husband’s brother. It is only to be found here and in verse 7. The verb form, *yavam*, was seen in Genesis 38:8 and it is then only seen again here in Scripture (in the next clause) and in verse 7. This was a cultural precept as carefully detailed in Genesis 38 and which is now being written into the Mosaic code.

The code is silent on whether this brother is already married or not, and so reading into it that he must be single is therefore not a reliable thought. It simply states as a point of law that a brother in such a matter is to perform this function.

Although there may be an exception, such as is found in Ruth concerning a near kinsman, it appears that the wording here refers to an actual brother in this passage. No matter what, it next says...

^{5 (con’t)} **and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.**

In this, there is the requirement that such a brother is to perform the duty (*yavam*, the verb) of a husband’s brother. This is with the explicit intent of giving her a child.

As this same verb was used in Genesis 38, it shows that the precept was already a custom in Israel, but it is now being codified into the law to ensure it would continue. The purpose of this rite is next stated...

⁶ And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother,

The Hebrew reads that the firstborn son: *yaqum al shem akhiv ha'met* – “shall rise over name brother, the dead.” The verse says nothing of a female child. It is certainly referring to a firstborn son who will rise to be over the name of the father who had died, thus being in charge of (over) his inheritance.

The same general phrase is used in Ruth 4:10, saying *l'haqim shem ha'met al nakhalato* – “to raise name the dead over his inheritance.” All of this is so...

⁶ (con't) that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

This is the purpose of the rite – the perpetuation of the name of the dead. Thus, it is the genealogical record that is being highlighted. The estate of the dead would obviously be involved, but it is the name that is given first consideration.

Despite this being a precept of law, Moses does not make it mandatory. On the other hand, he does make the consequences for not following through with it repugnant enough so that a person in such a position would carefully consider the repercussions...

⁷ But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife,

Here is another new word, *yebemeth*, meaning a sister-in-law. It will be seen three times in this passage and only twice more, in Ruth 1:15. As can be seen, the law clearly makes this a voluntary action. He can turn down the duty he is called to according to the law.

The brother has no delight to take her as his wife. The word used, *khapets*, means to be pleasing or to delight in. He is not so inclined to fulfill this law. If such is the case...

⁷ (con't) then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders,

It is the place of judgment. She will argue for a judgment against him because he is unwilling to perform the duty as directed by law. There at the gate, she will come to the elders...

⁷ (con't) and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'

In this, she uses both the noun and the verb form of the word *yavam* – *yevami* (my husband's brother) will not *yavemi* – (perform the brother-in-law's duty).

In other words, there is a responsibility attached to who he is in relation to the dead. The reason why he won't fulfill the duty is irrelevant. He may not like her, he may not want the child she bears to have his brother's name, or whatever.

This is similar to what Judah's son Onan did in Genesis 38, but not the same. He did take his brother's wife, but he didn't allow his seed to pass onto her. The proposition set forth here is that he simply will not take her as his wife. She wants this, but he refuses it. And she has a right to this, even if it cannot be forced. As such...

⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him.

The law is written, the culturally accepted norm has been codified into the law, and the terminology given to describe him in this fashion lays weight on the matter that this is his obligation, even if he can turn it down. This is what they convey to him, asking him to be reasonable in the matter...

^{8 (con't)} But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,'

He uses the same word as was just described of him, *khaphets*. He does not delight to take her. In refusing the taking of her, he is refusing to take delight in the law which instructs him to do this thing. As such, the law now gives her a right to humiliate him...

⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders,

The man has been counseled by the elders, he still refuses to agree to accept the responsibility of the custom, and thus he has disgraced both his brother and her. Therefore, she is given the right to bring disgrace upon him for failing to accept his responsibility. In this, she is to...

^{9 (con't)} remove his sandal from his foot,

The sandal is a symbol of authority over the place where it rests. This is seen, for example, in Psalm 60 where David claims authority over Edom –

“Moab is My washpot; Over Edom I will cast My shoe; Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me.” Psalm 60:8

In the casting of his shoe (it is the same word translated as sandal here) David was demonstrating that he delighted in taking possession over Edom. In Ruth, the near kinsman handed his shoe to Boaz as a resignation of the right to take possession of Elimelech's estate.

However, here the woman is given the right to forcibly take off his shoe, demonstrating first that her hand now has the power over his right. Secondly, it is a contemptible way of saying that he no longer has any claim to, or right in, the matter henceforth.

And more, to be unshod is a sign of a miserable and shameful existence. This is seen several times elsewhere –

“In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, ² at the same time the Lord spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, ‘Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.’ And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. ³ Then the Lord said, ‘Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴ so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.’” Isaiah 20:1-4

“So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.” 2 Samuel 15:30, 31

Along with this degrading act, she will...

^{9 (con't)} **spit in his face,**

The word is *yaraq*, to spit. This is its third and last use. It was used twice in Numbers 12:14 where it is clearly recognized as a sign of derision –

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘If her father had but spit [spitting, had spit] in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again.’”

Due to his unwillingness to perform his duty, he would thus be degraded before the elders by a woman. Along with that is one more note of unworthiness...

^{9 (con't)} **and answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house.’**

The actions speak for themselves, but after performing them, she then has the right to make him a comparative form of execration. In essence, “What I have done to him is what any person unwilling to perform this duty deserves.” Upon completion of this, the man would never be released from the shame of that act. As it says...

***10 (fin) And his name shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal removed.’**

v’niqra shemo b’yisrael beit khaluts ha’naal – “And shall be called his name in Israel house him who had removed the sandal.”

The word *shemo*, or “his name,” is explained by the words “the house of him.” In other words, his house and his legacy are together one of disgrace. It is both a symbol of his disgrace, and it is also a continuous reminder of it. The idea is, “Because he would not build up his brother’s house, his house is one of disgrace.”

It is your job and your duty to perform this law
Without it, there will be no heir for the name of your brother
Don’t shirk your responsibility; don’t have such a flaw
Don’t pass on what you should do to another

You are counseled to perform as is expected of you
And if you will not, your authority you will lose
Do that which is your responsibility to do
But... you also know that you can refuse

What woman would ever want something of you
When you would fail to act as you are told
By the woman, you will be rejected – so she will do
Any integrity of yours will be forever sold

III. The Unwilling Brother

The precept here predates the Law of Moses. A brother was to step in and to perform the duty of the *yavam*, the brother-in-law. What we have here is a short review of the inability of the law to bring forth children.

Man, once connected to God, is the dead husband, typified by Adam. The woman represents humanity. A son in this, would indicate a spiritual reconnection to God. Adam, the man who was once spiritually alive, died and left her no such children.

Even prior to the law, the precept of the *yavam* was already seen. The purpose of Genesis 38 was to set that idea as a precedent. The story there is one which anticipates the restoration of this spiritual connection to God. That is presented in a manner as clearly as it could be, as was shown in that particular sermon.

As this is so, life under the Law of Moses is typologically given as this brother. It is, ostensibly, available to give children to the woman as a *yavam*, or brother-in-law. As it says in Leviticus 18-

“You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.” Leviticus 18:5

However, “being under law” does not delight in the woman, and is – in fact – a state that is at enmity with her. Paul states that explicitly in Ephesians 2 –

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.” Ephesians 2:14, 15

In this case, life under the law typologically will not perform the duty to give the woman a son. Hence, she performs the rite of disgracing him and stripping him of any authority to ever have right to her again. However, Christ is of the woman, meaning humanity. And of Him, it says in the law itself –

“Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. ⁸I delight [*khapets*] to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.’” Psalm 40:7, 8

Because life under the law would not perform the duty, as is evidenced in the 1400+ years of it bringing no one to restoration with God, Christ came to do it. He delighted to do the will of God, and He performs what life under the law was unwilling to perform.

In this, He – as a member of humanity – took away the authority of the law and brought it to its end. Thus, life under the law is “The house of him who had his sandal removed.”

This is certainly indicated in Paul’s words to those at Corinth, saying, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). God in Christ is the nearer brother who could, and who did, give a Son, His Firstborn, to the barren woman. From there, life is restored to any who come to Him.

The lesson: There are no born-again children in humanity through life under the law, not before, nor will there ever be. Only in Christ is there a delight in bringing children to God through humanity. In this Son then comes a new family, among whom Christ Jesus is the Firstborn.

It is a beautiful passage, found in the law, that conveys to us the insufficiency of the law, apart from Christ, to do what it was given for. That thought is perfectly expressed by Paul in Romans 3 –

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.” Romans 3:21, 22

The law itself witnesses to what God was going to do in Christ. Righteousness is now imputed to those who simply reach out to God through Him, by faith, and accept what He has done.

If you have friends or family stuck in some law-observant church, keep pecking away at them. Their time is short, and they have an infinitely high hill to climb going that route. They won't make it. For anyone listening today, I ask you to trust in Christ, rest in Christ, and put away your futile attempts at pleasing God through any other avenue except Jesus Christ.

He is the answer to the problem that separates us from God. And surprisingly, the law itself testifies to that fact. Thank God for Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” Romans 3:32*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 25:11-19 *Use your brain cells; be sure they are set...* (You Shall Not Forget) (72nd 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.

A Brother in Israel

“If there is a dispute between men
And they come to court, that the judges
may judge them
And they justify the righteous

And the wicked they condemn

Then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves
to be beaten
That the judge will cause him to lie down;
ground facing nose

And be beaten in his presence, according to
his guilt
With a certain number of blows

Forty blows he may give him and no more
Lest he should exceed this, something not
right
And beat him with many blows above these
And your brother be humiliated in your
sight

“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads
out the grain
How does this law fit with the other laws?
Can I ask again?

“If brothers dwell together, and one of
them dies and has no son
The widow of the dead man shall not be
married to a stranger
-----outside the family
Her husband’s brother shall go in to her,
take her as his wife
And perform the duty of a husband’s
brother to her; so shall it be

And it shall be that the firstborn son
Which she bears will succeed to the name,
as to you I tell
Of his dead brother
That his name may not be blotted out of
Israel

But if the man does not want to take his
brother’s wife
Then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate
to the elders, and say
“My husband’s brother refuses to raise up a
name to his brother
-----in Israel

He will not perform the duty of my
husband’s brother
-----to this very day

Then the elders of his city shall call him and
speak to him
But if he stands firm and says, ‘I do not
want to take her
-----so he does convey
Then his brother’s wife shall come to him in
the presence
-----of the elders
Remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his
face
-----and answer and say

“So shall it be done to the man
Who will not build up his brother’s house;
so he shall be reproved
And his name shall be called in Israel
‘The house of him who had his sandal
removed

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...