

# OpenTheo

## Deuteronomy 24 - 26



### Deuteronomy - Steve Gregg

This discussion delves into the complexities of Deuteronomy 24-26, interpreting the rationale behind the laws presented. The speaker analyzes a long and complex sentence in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which can be interpreted in different ways. He explores the grounds for divorce and the issue of remarriage, emphasizing that the law does not specifically prohibit remarriage. The talk also covers various other laws and customs related to lending, harvests, and marriage.

### Transcript

Deuteronomy 24-26 Deuteronomy 24-26 Deuteronomy 24-26 Deuteronomy 24-26 Now, this is not really the place for us to go into an extensive study of what all the Scripture teaches about divorce, most of which we would have to get from the New Testament. Although it is an important study, it's an important matter of ethical question for Christians to master. It's just that we have, on a variety of other occasions in the Gospels and so forth, had occasion to discuss it.

And it's not the kind of thing we can detain ourselves with all day, which we could if we really allowed ourselves. The main thing here is to understand what this passage is saying and what it tells us about God's attitude and the Jewish understanding about divorce and remarriage. Again, it doesn't specifically say a man should divorce his wife.

It does not specifically say that if a man divorces his wife, he should give her a writing of divorcement. It doesn't specifically say that if a man divorces his wife and gives her a writing of divorcement, that she can go and marry somebody else. All of these things seem to be implied, but they're not stated.

It just says, if all those things happen, then, and there's another condition too, and her second husband dies or puts her away. So if her first husband divorces her, if he gives her a writing of divorcement, if she marries another man, and if that other man dies or divorces her, if those things happen, none of which are commanded, none of which are even specifically said to be permitted, but if they happen, then what is specifically forbidden is that she cannot go back to her first husband again. So this law really only

legislates one thing, and that is, in the event that all these things have occurred, the first husband cannot take her back again.

That's the one law that's given here. However, in the course of getting there, it's a long sentence, certainly a sentence that goes four verses, a sentence worthy of Paul. But Paul didn't write this particular one, but Paul wrote some sentences that are 13 verses long before they reach a period.

But obviously, a sentence that long has a lot of interrelated parts. And the Jews came to understand this to mean that God permitted a man to divorce his wife so long as he would give her a writing of divorcement. Now, that's not stated, but it may in fact be implied.

The Jews may have been correct. In fact, it would appear that they were correct because Jesus would seem to support that they were understanding Moses correctly here in Matthew chapter 19, verse seven and eight. The Pharisees said to Jesus, why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and to put her away? They are referring to this passage because this is the passage, the only passage in the law that Moses said anything about a certificate of divorce.

So they're referring to Deuteronomy 24. And they said, why did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and to put her away? Well, technically, as you saw, he didn't command anyone to do such a thing. He said, if a man does that and then these other events follow and if all these circumstances line up in this certain way, then the first husband can't take her back.

But he doesn't command anyone to divorce or to give a certificate of divorce. But that is found in the passage. But then Jesus says to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives.

But from the beginning, it was not so. Now, it would appear that Jesus is agreeing that this law of Moses does permit people to divorce their wives. That, Jesus tells us, actually goes beyond what we could have known for sure from just reading the passage.

Because the passage doesn't say whether God permits it or not, it just says if it happens. But Jesus agreed, apparently, that this passage, because this is the passage that he and the Pharisees are discussing, and he mentions Moses, that this passage does permit divorce. But Jesus goes on to say that if a man divorces his wife for any reason other than her sexual immorality and he marries another, he commits adultery.

And whoever marries her commits adultery. That's Matthew 19. So Jesus would appear to agree that this passage permits divorce.

It's not God's desire that divorce occur, but it is permitted. It is permitted because people are hard-hearted. It's permitted because people are sinners.

It was not something God had in mind from the beginning when he created marriage, before there was sin. He intended for people to be one flesh, and God would make them one flesh, and what God made one, people should not separate, Jesus said. That is the idea, that is the goal.

Every Christian should desire that no marriage should ever end, Christian or non-Christian marriage. But it was permitted by Moses. And Jesus doesn't come out and say, but I don't permit it.

What he says is if you divorce for any reason other than fornication, well then that's not a good thing, and especially if you marry another woman. But that goes beyond what Deuteronomy is talking about. It's not here talking about the man divorcing his wife and him marrying another woman.

It's talking about him divorcing his wife and him marrying the same woman, after she's gone on and married somebody else. Now it does say that after she's been with the other husband, if she were to go back to her first husband, he shouldn't take her out because she's been defiled. Some people say she was defiled by remarriage, and that she shouldn't have remarried.

But if it was in fact morally defiling for her to remarry, it would be morally defiling because she's not free to marry, and she's still her first husband's wife, and therefore her second marriage would be adultery. And if it was adultery, she should be stone deaf, not just forbidden to marry her first husband again. In fact, the way it reads in Deuteronomy, there's nothing that would forbid her to go on and marry a third husband.

If her first husband divorces her and she marries another, and he dies or divorces her, the only thing forbidden to her is that she marry her first husband. It doesn't say she couldn't marry a third husband, and we do know that that did happen because we know Jesus, for example, talked to the woman at the well, in John chapter 4, and she had had five husbands, serially. In all likelihood, she had been divorced by all of them, and she had had five husbands, and Jesus did not indicate that that was wrong.

In fact, he called each of those relationships husbands. He did say she was now living with a man who was not her husband, which implied that she was now doing something that was wrong. Having five husbands he didn't condemn.

There's no way that you could condemn a woman having a husband, no matter which number he was. Having a husband is an okay thing. What's not okay is to live with a man who's not your husband, and that's what she was doing also.

So that was her sin. Many people, especially following an ethic informed by Christianity, which we have the advantage of all the teaching of Jesus, this woman did not have, they think that she was at fault for having married five husbands. There's nothing in the law

to forbid it, and we don't find Jesus criticizing her for it.

He just points it out to her. I know you've had five husbands, and you're now living with a man who isn't your husband. If he was finding fault for anything, it was that last point.

So it would appear that under the law, and even as Jesus would comment on it, a woman could have multiple husbands serially if they each divorced her. But what was forbidden was for the man to take her back after she had been married to somebody else. Now, the law does not say that if a man divorces his wife, and she remains single for a long time, and he remains single for a long time, and then they decide to reconcile, that they can't get back together.

It does not say that a divorced couple cannot reconcile. It says if she in the meantime has become another man's wife, and then she's free from that marriage, then she can't come back. There's only a very narrow set of circumstances that this is forbidding.

And it's a funny thing that it should even give special attention to it, because there are so many different circumstances of divorce and remarriage and so forth that are common, that no legislation is really given about, but there's one case which is a strange one. And, you know, I don't know of any case like this where a man has divorced his wife, she's married to someone else, later she's become single again, and she got back together with her first husband. I'm sure there are cases like it.

But that's the only particular circumstance this law talks about. Now, some people think that after a divorce has taken place, then, let's give this scenario. A woman divorces her husband in today's world.

She goes to marry someone else, and then she realizes that was a sin because her husband was faithful to her, and therefore she's living in adultery in her second marriage, as Jesus said. She said the second marriage in that case is adultery. It's not marriage, it's adultery.

Well, then she repents and goes back to her first husband. I've heard Christians say she can't do that, but she can. Her husband didn't divorce her in the first place.

This is talking about a man who rejects his wife, not a woman who rejects her husband. If she rejects him and goes off and takes another man, she's living in adultery. No matter what the legal status of that coupling is, it's an adulterous relationship, and for her to go back to her real faithful husband is the right thing to do.

But if he has put her away, he has rejected her, her coming back is not an option to her, she has to go and she maybe marries someone else. But after her husband has tainted her like that, has declared her unclean, he divorced her in the first place because he found some uncleanness in her, in verse 1. That, I think, is the sense in which it is said she is defiled, in verse 4. He shouldn't take her back after she has been defiled. That is

defiled by him, defiled in his eyes.

He has declared her to be defiled, that's why he divorced her in the first place. He can't just change his mind now and say, Well, you were obnoxious enough for me to end the marriage before, but I'm going to overlook that now and marry you again. What guarantee does she have that he won't do the same thing again? If he found something in her that he felt was intolerable to him, then he can't.

It's rather hypocritical of him to say, now I want her back. No, she's defiled, remember? You found some uncleanness in her, that was the defilement. Now, she wasn't defiled as far as this other man is concerned.

He was willing to have her, you weren't. And this is, in a sense, I think, a measure to keep a man from divorcing his wife frivolously. Because sometimes in Middle Eastern cultures, people did divorce frivolously over almost nothing.

And even in Jesus' day, there were some rabbis who thought that was okay, to divorce your wife for just any reason you wanted to. And I think this law is saying, well, here's a deterrent to that. Although the law here doesn't say what the grounds for divorce really are, it's Jesus to come and say that.

He says only grounds for divorce are the infidelity of the woman, sexual immorality. But the law doesn't specify that. But without specifically saying, this is and this is not grounds for divorce, it's saying, if you divorce for whatever reason, whatever you choose, you are cutting off, in all likelihood, any opportunity to have that woman back.

So don't just divorce her over an argument you've had, and then you're later going to regret that you did so, because she can go and marry someone else. And once she's done that, you're out of her life, forever. You've given up your options.

And some scholars think that this law is also to prevent the first husband from interfering with the second marriage. That is, once he's divorced his wife and she's married someone else, if he decides he wants her back, then he might go try to persuade her to leave her present husband and come back to him. Well, the law would say he can't do that, even if she leaves her present husband.

Even if he dies, he can't have her back. So leave her alone. Leave that marriage alone.

Basically, it keeps the second marriage from being pestered by the ex-husband. Anyway, those are some of the thoughts about this. It's clearly a strange law, because it only addresses one narrow set of circumstances related to divorce or marriage, without addressing all the multitude of other variety of scenarios that exist.

But it would appear that these may be the reasons, basically, to discourage hasty and privileged divorce. And also to possibly protect the inviolability of the second marriage

from intrusion by the first husband who's changed his mind and wants her back. Now, verse 5. When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business.

He shall be free at home one year and bring happiness to his wife, whom he has taken. Now, this is a stand-alone law. It's a man's obligation to bring happiness to his wife.

I think the literal in Hebrew says, cheer up his wife. Let him stay home and cheer up his wife. So a wife's happiness is defined as a man's concern.

So much a concern that it outweighs even going to work, even going to war. When there's a war to be fought, when there's a national security to be maintained, there's something more important for a newlywed man, and that's to make his wife happy. Now, he doesn't have to neglect his duties for the rest of his life, the whole marriage, but a year is given to the establishment of that marriage.

Obviously, the idea is they need to have a firm foundation for life so that marriage will not end up in divorce like the ones described in the previous verses. And you need to make your wife happy. And it may take a year to figure out how to do that.

So he's got to focus all his attention on it. Getting married isn't something you do in your spare time. It's not something you do as a sideline to whatever else you do in your life.

Marriage preempts other important duties, business, war. I mean, those are important duties of a man. And yet it's clear that he doesn't just kind of tag a wife onto his life just to, you know, just as an arm ornament or, you know, something like that, a trophy wife or someone to just have around to say he's married or even just have kids with, but he's supposed to actually have a relationship with her, which is conducive to her happiness and to put aside other things for it.

After I had been married to my last wife for some time, she told me that she thought it would have been wise, and she's probably right about this, if when we got married, I put aside all ministry for a year. I didn't think of it at the time because, frankly, she was in the ministry too when we got married. She had been on the missions field and she was doing street ministry.

We were both in the ministry. So we got married and became ministering together. But as a matter of fact, probably there would have been some value in just both of us taking time out.

Not everyone has the economic liberty to just put aside all business for a year, though. But it was in those days, I think, common for a married couple to live with the parents so they wouldn't have to pay rent and probably be fed by the parents and by the wedding gifts and so forth that they got for the first year so that they could just really concentrate on their relationship. That can't always be done now because, like I said, economic

circumstances are such that married couples usually don't live with the parents.

They don't live rent free. They don't receive so many wedding gifts that they can live on them for a whole year. But that was something that was desirable, perhaps a good custom to wish to come back.

Maybe marriages would be more stable if that kind of priority was given to the relationship by the man. No man shall take the lower and upper millstone in pledge, for he takes one's living in pledge. Now, when someone borrows money from you, they have to give you a pledge collateral, you know, so to kind of guarantee that they're going to give you the money back, they're going to pay you back someday.

So you take something of theirs which you hold until they pay you back and then you give it back. That's what a pledge is. But among the things you can take, you can't take the tools of their trade from them.

A millstone is what you grind your grain with. First of all, you need that every day to make your bread just to eat. And it may actually be that somebody is making their living with that millstone.

There's an upper and a lower millstone. The lower one is a wheel, usually a stone wheel that is laid sideways like flat. And then the other one rolls like a wheel on top of it and crushes the grain.

It rolls in a circle around the bottom millstone. Those two together are needed to grind the grain. And you can't just say, OK, I'll take the top millstone from you until you pay me back.

Well, how am I going to grab a grain? I can't take. You can't take either of the millstones or any of their tools of their trade or any of the things necessary for their living. You have to take something that's not so essential to their survival.

And it says, if a man is found kidnapping, verse seven, any of his brethren of the children of Israel and mistreats or sells them, then the kidnapper shall die and you shall put away the evil person from among you. This law itself would condemn what we call Atlantic slavery, the slavery that was practiced in the United States. Once again, people sometimes find fault with the Bible because it doesn't condemn all slavery.

Why should it condemn all slavery? Not all slavery was unjust, but there is slavery that is unjust. And the slavery that was practiced in this country was unjust because the slaves were kidnapped and sold. They were kidnapped from Africa and brought here against their will and sold.

That's kidnapping. The slave trade should have been put to death. Not because slavery in all of its forms is evil, but in that form, it is certainly evil.

And it's capital crime as far as God is concerned. Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy that you diligently observed to do according to all the priests. The Levites shall teach you just as I commanded them.

So you should be careful to do. Remember what the Lord did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt. That's referring to the fact that God struck her with leprosy in Numbers chapter 12.

I'm not really sure why that's mentioned here, because this is really a law about keeping the rules about leprosy that are given in Leviticus 13 and 14. The memory of Miriam and her being struck with leprosy probably is, it's not really an example of keeping those laws, which is what the command is here. But rather, it's kind of like remember Lot's wife, like Jesus said, more or less to remember somebody who did a bad thing and they suffered for it.

In this case, Miriam suffered from leprosy. But because leprosy is mentioned, it brings Miriam to mind and it can serve as a warning to those who might be rebellious like she was on that occasion. When you lend your brother anything, you should not go into his house to get his pledge.

You shall stand outside and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. And if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. You shall, in any case, return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you.

And it will be righteousness to you before the Lord, your God. You should not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land and your gates. Each day you should give him his wages and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and his heart is set on it.

Lest he cry out against you to the Lord and it be sin to you. So this has to do with the way that people who have money and land treat the poor who don't have money and land. Many times poor people had to borrow money just to eat.

And of course, as we pointed out, some kind of pledge would be taken from them. But if you are a rich person who lent money, you would not take a man's clothing as a pledge, his garments or something that he needed to sleep in. That is, you can't make his life more miserable by lending him money.

Lending him money is supposed to be an act of generosity. But if you have to sleep cold because you've got his garment as a pledge, then you have not really shown him a mercy at all. And it says in every case you should give him his pledge back at night.

Well, if you give it back to him at night, then you don't have any collateral from him. But you just take the risk because he's poor. And it says he will bless you and it'll be



righteous to you before God in verse 13.

So the idea is do the right thing, even if maybe it puts your loan at risk because you're dealing with a human being. And it's more important to you that you are righteous in the sight of God than that you have covered all your financial bases and you've got everything secured that way. And that's in contrast to what will be a sin to you in verses 14 and 15.

If you oppress the poor, normally that was this, that you paid a man at the end of the day for his work. People were not rich enough in those days to have a few days money and food stored up at home. The rich would have those things, but the poor, and there was no middle class, there were a few rich and there were a lot of poor.

And the poor were so poor that they needed to work every day to make food for that day and they had to get paid at the end of the day. And that's because you see throughout the Old and the New Testament, even in the parable of Jesus about the workers in the vineyard, that at the end of the day, they lined up to get paid. If you held a man's wages overnight, you were oppressing him.

He has worked for you. You owe it to him and you're supposed to pay it when you owe it. If you hold it, you're letting him down.

His heart is set on it. He's kind of hoping to eat that night. It's interesting that he says, don't let the sun go down on it.

In verse 15, that is, make sure you pay him before the sun goes down. But that's also interesting that Paul used that expression. Do not let the sun go down on your anger.

Where Paul is saying, be angry, but don't sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger. Obviously, it means that you should, before nightfall, pay your debt of forgiveness to the person you're angry at.

He's borrowing language from this business about paying your debt sometimes. Don't let the sun go down on an unpaid debt. And so also don't let the sun go down on your anger because your anger is an unpaid debt.

You owe it to someone to forgive them. You don't owe it to them. You owe it to God.

And so he commands you to forgive. So don't let that debt go unpaid by nightfall. Now, in this passage we read, it mentions verses 10 and 11, that if you lend money to a poor man and he's going to give you a pledge, you don't go into his house and get the pledge.

You honor his faith. He's a poor man, but you still give him some human dignity. Let him go into his own house and bring the pledge out to you.

You don't say, I'm the lender here. I'm the fat cat. I'm the one who can.

I'm in control of the situation. I'm going to go in and take your pledge out of your house. No, you stay out of his house.

That's his house. You let him go into his house and bring the pledge out. Just show some respect to the guy, even though he's a poor man.

He still needs to have his own dignity and his own space for his home and family. Verse 16, the father shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers. A person shall be put to death for his own sin.

Now, this is also stated almost almost tediously at great length in Ezekiel chapter 18. It impacts that principle. It might seem that that's violated in some cases, like the Canaanites, where they were all killed, including women and children.

Well, the children certainly were being... it was their father's sins that brought that problem upon them. The children haven't done something as far as we know. Certainly, the infants have not.

And also, we have a case like Achan. When they come into the promised land in the book of Joshua, and Achan steals the gold wedge in the Babylonian garment, which was to be devoted to the Lord, and Achan has to be put to death for it. But his family had to be put to death, too.

His wife and children and he were all lined up and they were all stoned to death and killed. And that seems to be children suffering for their father's sins. But I think not.

First of all, we don't know that Achan had any young children. His family may have been fairly mature. His booty was hidden inside the tent where they all lived.

There's a good chance that his children and wife were all accomplices of his. And I think we have to assume that is true. Because God had a principle.

He would not punish children who are innocent for their parents' sins. Now, the Canaanites are a different story. That's a case of a whole civilization being exterminated.

No less than Sodom and Gomorrah being exterminated. Men, women, and children died there. But it's interesting also, if a man is not to be put to death for his father's sins, then is it correct to say that we are all born condemned for Adam's sins, our father? And the idea of original sin, as it's normally conveyed in theology, is that all humans are born condemned of Adam's sin, even before they commit any sins of their own.

And in addition to being condemned of their father's sins, they also have a bent in their own hearts towards sinfulness. These are the two parts of the doctrine of original sin, as it's usually taught. That you're born guilty of your father's sins, and if you die, you go to hell.

That's at least what Calvinism teaches. Calvinism teaches that if a child dies in infancy, it goes to hell. Except some Calvinists believe that a child might die in infancy and yet be one of the elect, in which case it will not go to hell.

But some children who die do go to hell because they're not elect. But why would a child go to hell? They haven't committed any sin. Well, they say because of Adam's sin.

They're born guilty of Adam's sin. I'm not so sure the Bible says any such thing as that. I don't read anywhere that children are born guilty of Adam's sin.

I do read that we all suffer because of Adam's sin. We all have a sinful tendency. We all die.

But the ultimate condemnation is the judgment seat of Christ. I don't think when a person who died as a baby stands before God on the judgment day, that God's going to say, you're going to burn in hell forever and ever because someone you never met named Adam did something I was unhappy about. God doesn't have that as a rule of His justice.

He does not pervert justice like that. The father should not be put to death for the children's sin, nor shall the children be put to death for the father's sins. That is ultimate condemnation.

Of course, all people die, and we do all die because of Adam's sin. But that's not our ultimate condemnation, because after we die, there's still more. There's still something more.

There's a judgment. There's a destiny. And because of that, certainly all people die because of Adam's sin.

That's just because Adam was the human race, and death came upon the human race, and we're part of that race. But ultimate standing before God at the judgment, and what happens after that, that's not going to be determined by what somebody else did. It's going to be determined by what you did.

The Bible says that everyone will receive the things done in his body, the things he did. Everyone will be judged according to his works, the Bible says. So it's not someone else's works that you're going to be judged by.

Verse 17, you shall not pervert justice due to a stranger or the father's or take a widow's garment as a pledge. But you should remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. Therefore, I command you to do this thing.

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back and get it. It shall be from a stranger, from the fatherless and the widow, that

Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, that is, you beat the branches, make the olives fall down.

That's how you harvest them. You shall not go over the boughs again. It shall be for a stranger, the fatherless and the widow.

And when you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward. It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. And you should remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt.

Therefore, I command you to do this thing. And this is just the law of gleaning. Gleanings have come up previously in Leviticus.

And the idea is that, you know, take what's a reasonable amount out of your vineyard and your field and your olive yard. But don't take every last grape and every last olive and every last head of grain. Leave some of that for the poor to come behind and they can glean from there.

That would be one of the means by which the poor can be supported. There were quite a few laws, obviously, intended to help the poor. There was the tithe of the third year.

There was the, you could walk through someone's field and take what you needed to eat. And at the harvest time, you could go and glean behind the harvesters. This is how Ruth survived.

When she came back from Moab to Bethlehem, she found a man, Boaz, who was harvesting. And she was able to glean with other poor people. You know, the poor people would just kind of come behind the hired reapers, harvesters.

And actually, we're told that Boaz told his workers, leave some of that, leave some heads of grain on the ground on purpose for her. You know, not just, not just, you know, don't go back and gather every last thing, but actually drop some handfuls on purpose, it says. Because he wanted to help her out.

Chapter 25. If there is a dispute between men and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. 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.

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. Now, this idea of beating a crook doesn't sound very humane in our modern society.

But this is actually a law that is saying that when the judge issues a sentence, for

example, beating is a possible example. There could be other, other sentences for various crimes. But if the penalty is they be beaten, it has to be executed in front of the judge's eyes.

He can't just say to the guy who was offended, go out and beat the guy, give him, you know, 35 lashes. Forty is the most that could be given. It could be a lesser number.

Because the man who the man who inflicted the lashes on men had to be do so under the supervision of the judge to make sure that it was not exceeded. The judge was responsible not only for giving the sentence, but also for overseeing it to make sure that the sentence was not exceeded. First for you shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.

Again, Paul quotes this twice. In both cases, he's talking about the support of people who are in the ministry. In First Corinthians 9.9, Paul mentions this as a right that he has to be supported for the ministry.

But he mentions that although he has this right, this is a right he has never used. He has never claimed the right to be supported for the ministry. He himself worked with his hands and put aside that right.

And in First Corinthians 9, the whole chapter is there urging the Corinthians to take on the attitude that Paul has of giving up your rights when it's helpful. When it's helpful to the gospel, when it's helpful for the souls of men to give up your rights. And he gives a number of rights that he has that he does not use.

Including, he said, the right to be married and take a wife around with him. The right to be paid for the ministry, the right to eat whatever he wants to eat. But he says, I put aside these rights because of the gospel sake.

And so, although Paul did not expect to be paid for the ministry, he said the only reason he didn't expect it is because that was a right he was voluntarily surrendering. But he did insist that a minister has that right. If he ministers in spiritual things, Paul said, for him to receive that carnal things, physical benefits, money and support and so forth.

From those to whom he ministers, that's something that is a fulfillment of this. You shall not muzzle an ox that treads out the grain. The ox is working.

Don't tantalize it and tease it by letting it work around the food and not letting it eat any. Don't put a muzzle on it. Let it eat while it works.

And he also quotes it in 1 Timothy 5, verse 18, where he's actually giving instructions about the support of elders in the church. He said the elders who rule well should be kind of worthy of double honorarium, double honor. And he means support.

And he quotes this verse about it. And he says, especially those who labor in the Word and Doctrine, but he said he said he gave other instructions about the elders to there. But here he was saying that the elders were worthy of support because of their work.

And he quotes this verse here. Interestingly, in First Corinthians nine, nine, when he quotes this verse, he says, does God care for oxen or does he say it all together for our sakes? And the answer is for our sakes. This is not really primarily a concern for animal rights.

But on the other hand, although it's not primarily a concern for animal rights, since God was had a bigger issue that he was that Paul identifies here. It does suggest compassion to animals. It does suggest not being cruel to animals, too.

If brothers were together and one of them died 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 into her, take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. In Latin, husband's brother is the Latin word lever, L.E.V.I.R. Lever Latin for husband's brother.

And so this law is called the law of leverite marriage. This is what's always been called the law of the leverite marriage, the brother in law's marriage duties. If a woman, if a woman's husband died, leaving no child, she has to marry his brother if he has one.

And the first child will be named after the dead man so that the inheritance and the name of a man of Israel will not die out. It shall be that the firstborn son, which she bears, will succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. Now, presumably, she now is the wife of her former brother in law, and she could have other children, which now are named after her present husband, her former brother in law.

But the first child of that marriage has to be named after the dead brother. And this would be a situation where polygamy might be actually mandatory because the husband's brother might already be married, but he still has the duty of raising up a child to his brother's wife, his brother's name. That's called the duty of the husband's brother.

But if a man does not want to take his brother's wife, and this could be imagined if the wife was particularly obnoxious, there would be women who, I mean, I'll tell you what, I could imagine the wives of some of my brothers, not my blood brothers, but Christian brothers, that I would not wish to have the duty of marrying them if the brother would die. There are definitely women who would not be desirable as wives. And one could imagine that being the case sometimes that a man's brother dies and the widow is some of the guy I never got along with.

I never got along with my brother's wife, you know, I mean, why would I want to marry her and have children with her? So there would be cases where a man might refuse to step into that role. But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife and let his brother's wife go up to the gate of the elders and say, my husband's brother refuses to raise up a name for his brother in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he stands firm and says, I do not want to take her, 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 and his name should be called in Israel, the house of him who has his sandal removed.

Now, this act of taking the sandal off, it's hard to know exactly what that represents. The sandal could represent the land. Every place the sole of your foot you set should be yours, God said to Abraham, and it may be that the land inheritance, which should have been perpetuated by the brother raising up the seed to his brother, is being forfeited and therefore his sandal taken off as an emblem of that.

This this custom had changed a little bit in the days of Ruth and Boaz because it was a few hundred years later. Boaz was a kinsman of Ruth and she was a widow and a childless widow. And so a brother of sorts or a relative was supposed to marry her and raise up children for her.

Her deceased husband, Boaz, was willing to do it, but there was another kinsman closer in relationship who had the first right of refusal. And so Boaz went and talked to this other man who was ahead of him in line, according to these laws. And the man said, you know, our brother, widow Ruth is here, would you, yours is the right to redeem her.

And they said, OK, I'll marry her. And but then Boaz said, well, but there's some other legal, you know, obligations to come with it, which he delineated. Oh, well, I don't want to do it then.

And so Boaz married her instead, but the man who turned down his right to marry her. Actually, there was a ceremony that was performed that had to do with the sandal, but it wasn't exactly the same ceremony. If you look at Ruth chapter four, where this is found, it's just after the book of Judges, because it occurred during the period of the judges.

In Ruth chapter four, it says in verse eight, therefore, well, verse seven and eight. Now, this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging to confirm anything. One man took off his sandal and gave it to the other.

And this was an attestation in Israel. Therefore, the New York kinsmen said to Boaz, buy it for yourself. So he took off his sandal.

Apparently, the man who was in line ahead of Boaz to redeem this woman and the

inheritance and so forth. He took his sandal off and gave it to Boaz. It's like, OK, my right of inheritance I'm giving to you.

And it's a little different than this procedure, but it was probably something that developed out of this. This is probably an evolution of this custom that came along. If a man refused to marry his brother's widow, she would spit in his face in a public ceremony and take off his sandal.

And he would be called the man who's from the house of him who had his sandal removed. Anyway, this law of legal marriage. This is something that has been mentioned in the law previously, but even before the law was given, it was practiced as a custom in the Middle East.

And we remember it was relevant to the household of Judah because Judah had three sons and the first one died childless. And his widow, Tamar, had to marry the next son in line. And that one died childless, too.

And of course, it was the obligation in the custom of the culture for the next son in line to marry. But Judah withheld her from him. And so we can see that even before the law was given, the Middle Eastern peoples just intuitively saw the appropriateness of this, that a man who died childless is a tragedy at the end of his life.

It's sort of like that's the only eternal life they knew of was to be perpetuated on this world through your descendants after you die. And for a man to die with no descendants was to be considered a great tragedy. And so a man would do this for his brother to give his son a descendant to carry on his name.

Verse 11, if two men fight together and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals, then you should cut off her hand. Your eyes shall not pity her. This is a very strange law, because in most cases, although Islamic law often prescribes the cutting off of hands for people who like to steal things and stuff, physical mutilation was not a normal part of the punishments that were prescribed for crimes.

Of course, an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, stroke for stroke, and so forth, does suggest there would be situations where mutilation would be the appropriate penalty for someone who had caused a similar mutilation to another person. And maybe in this case, there is the assumption of mutilation too. A woman who's trying to help her husband out in a fight, and I'm not sure how she'd get in the position to do this, two men fighting it out.

I don't know how she'd get close enough or in the right position to do this, but obviously a woman knows that if you want to incapacitate a man, he's got some very sensitive organs there, and she would no doubt seek, I mean, she's not trying to do something



sexually arousing, she's trying to do something damaging. So she might actually do something to injure a man's genitals and therefore to render him impotent or sterile. And that, you know, she might help her husband in other ways without violation, but if she interferes with the reproductive capacity of an Israelite, remember reproduction is very important to them, then, well, that's just something she shouldn't do.

I mean, she can box the guy's ears if she wants to, but she can't mess with his family jewels. That's going to be something that has to be left alone. And it's so serious, in fact, that her hand would be cut off for doing such a thing.

It says, you shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. Remember, this is all about marketing practices of having deceptive weights that you use in the scales to act like you're giving more of the product than you are or giving more money than you are.

These things were done by weight and scales, and so they have a separate set of weights that were not accurate in order to favor your own side of the transaction with a common practice and one that is forbidden. You should have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord your God has given you. For all who do such things and all who behave unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord your God.

So, you know, piety extends not just to what you do at church, but what you do in business, at the office, in the factory, in the marketplace. Being honest and fair in your business dealings is part of the obligation of a godly person. It may seem mundane, it may seem carnal to be concerned about business practices, but there's nothing carnal about it all.

It's part of being just and righteous, and that's what God cares about more than religious and pious. Verse 17, remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt. The Amalekites, they were the first to attack Israel when they came out.

They had a war with them in chapter 17 of Exodus. That's the war where when Moses' hands were in the air, Israel prevailed, and when his hands were down, Amalek prevailed. But they eventually prevailed against Amalek and defeated him.

It says, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear when you were tired and weary, and he did not fear God. Now, we aren't given that detail in Exodus. We're just told in Exodus 17 that Amalek attacked and made war with Israel, and they fought back and defeated Amalek.

But here it tells us more detail. Actually, Amalek did this in a really treacherous and rather dishonorable way. They picked on the weak, the stragglers at the end of the line who were too tired.

They're the ones that Amalek picked on instead of picking on some of their own side. Therefore, it shall be when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around about, meaning the Canaanites, in the land which your God has given you to possess as an inheritance, that when you've done that, you're going to go after Amalek, who is not one of the Canaanites. But there's still an unfinished penalty owed to Amalek, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven you shall not forget.

It was after the time of the judges, pretty much, when Saul became king, that Samuel gave Saul the commission to go and wipe out the Amalekites, which he didn't do. He killed most of them, but he kept the king alive, and that was a rebellion against God on Saul's part that actually lost him his kingdom. But it was the fulfillment of this particular command of Moses, which almost 400 years later, Saul was told to go and carry it out.

I guess it had to wait until they had a king to lead them. At least that's how they figured. Chapter 26, and it shall be when you come into the land which the Lord your God has given you as an inheritance and you possess it and dwell in it, that you should take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you should bring from your land that the Lord your God has given you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to make his name abide.

And you should go to one who is priest in those days and say to him, I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come into the country which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us. Then the priest will take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. Now there's more, but this is apparently something to do with the first harvest.

Once they come in the land, not every year. They do have to bring the first fruits to God every year. But this whole ceremony suggests that they are here acknowledging that they have now come into the land.

They're bringing their first fruits of their harvest the first year and acknowledging that this ceremony is probably a ceremony that they only had to do one time. It would be a little time consuming if every Israelite had to come and say all these words that we're going to read. And you shall answer and say before the Lord your God.

My father was a Syrian about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there. Few in number, and there he became a nation great, mighty and populous. Now to refer to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, especially Jacob, since that's the one who went down into Egypt and his son as a Syrian may seem strange to us because, well, he was a Hebrew and he was really of Mesopotamian stock, if you go back far enough.

That's where Abraham was from. But you see, the Israelites really were Syrians in effect. They lived in Syria for a long time.

Most of them were born in Syria. That's where Laban was. Laban was in Syria.

And Jacob had gone down to Syria, and he got his wives. His wives were Syrians. He himself was partially Syrian because his mother, Rebecca, was from the same place, Syria.

Jacob was half Syrian, and his sons were three quarters Syrian because their mothers were Syrians. And Jacob himself, who was only half Syrian, lived in Syria for 20 years. The very years that his family was being formed.

So there's every reason to speak of him as a Syrian. Just like I could call myself an Oregonian, having lived in Oregon for 16 years of my life, though I was not born there. You know, he lived there 20 years, had his kids there, and all his kids were Syrians, at least three quarters, because their dad was half Syrian and their mothers were full Syrian.

So to say I was a Syrian or my father was a Syrian is quite true, and went down to Egypt. But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. Then we cried out to the Lord God, our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression.

So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with outstretched arm, with great terror and signs and wonders. He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flown with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O Lord, have given me.

Then you shall set it before the Lord your God and worship before the Lord your God. So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you. And when you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat within your dates and be filled.

Then you shall say before the Lord your God, I have removed the holy tithe from my house and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow. According to all your commandments which you have commanded me, I have not transgressed your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for any unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead.

I have obeyed the voice of the Lord my God and have done according to all that you have commanded me. Look down from your holy habitation from heaven and bless your people Israel and the land which you have given us, just as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. Okay, so they're supposed to bring their first fruits and

their tithe.

This law has to do with the first fruits, apparently the first harvest of the first year they come into the land. And then also every third year when they bring their tithe, the one that goes to the Levite and the poor. Now we saw earlier a reference to this third year of tithing in Deuteronomy 14.

And it was not real clear and the rabbis themselves had to make kind of a call about this. Whether the third year was the regular tithe of the third year or whether it was a secondary tithe besides the ordinary yearly tithe. Because the yearly tithe was said to go entirely to the Levites.

But this third year tithe was specifically to be also for the poor and the stranger and so forth. And so it may be an additional tithe, that's not clear. But in any case when they bring the third year tithe and when they bring the annual first fruits, which would include the tithe too.

I have no doubt they would bring the tithe the same time they bring the first fruits. Or maybe, I guess maybe not. Maybe they would bring the first fruits and then later bring the tithe when it was at the end of the harvest.

Not really sure. We're not given a lot of detail about when all this was done. Obviously it was done at the appropriate time of the agricultural cycle.

Verse 16. This day the Lord your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments. Therefore you should be careful to observe them with all your heart, with all your soul.

Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments. And that you will obey His voice. Also today the Lord has proclaimed you to be His special people.

Just as He has promised you that you should keep His commandments. And that He will set you high above all the nations which He has made in praise, in name and honor. And that you may be a holy people to Yahweh your God just as He has spoken.

So Israel had the opportunity to be the chief nation in the world. To be set above all the nations which God has made. High above them.

And that would be of course conditioned upon their being obedient to His command. Sadly their subsequent history is a testimony to the fact that they didn't value that very highly. And they didn't bother to meet the conditions.

They didn't keep His commands. They didn't stay loyal to Him. And therefore as we see they have not become the greatest of the nations in the world.

Alright now when we come back from a break. We'll find that chapters 27 and 28 are concerned with blessings and curses. And the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience.

Chapter 28 in particular is an extremely long chapter. 68 verses is about as long as two other chapters. So we're going to try to get through it anyway.

Through chapters 27 and 28 in one session. Because it's all kind of one stream of consciousness there. One thought.

But we'll take a break and come back to that.