

## LESSON NINE 12:1-28

### B. THE LAW ("the Statutes and Ordinances") (12:1—26:19)

#### 1. ONE SANCTUARY (12:1-28)

These are the statutes and the ordinances which ye shall observe to do in the land which Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath given thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2 Ye shall surely destroy all the places wherein the nations that ye shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: 3 and ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their name out of that place. 4 Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah your God. 5 But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; 6 and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: 7 and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee. 8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; 9 for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 10 But when ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God causeth you to inherit, and he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 then it shall come to pass that to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you: your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows ye vow unto Jehovah. 12 And ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates, forasmuch as he hath no portion nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; 14 but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh within all thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul, according to the blessings of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee; the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the gazelle, and as of the hart. 16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. 17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy grain, or of thy new wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herd or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill-offerings, nor the heave-offering of thy hand; 18 But thou shalt eat them before Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. 19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest in thy land.

20 When Jehovah thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul desireth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, after all the desire of thy soul. 21 If the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to put his name there, be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which Jehovah hath given thee, as I have commanded thee; and thou mayest eat within thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul. 22 Even as the gazelle and as the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat thereof: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof alike. 23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh. 24 Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. 25 Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah. 26 Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which Jehovah shall choose: 27 and thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt eat the flesh. 28 Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:1-28

226. Wouldn't it have been enough to simply worship the Lord in sincerity and truth and not to fight other religions? Why all the negative action?
227. What advantage was there in one place of worship?
228. Notice the laxity suggested in verse 8, or is this the thought of the verse?
229. What could be slaughtered at home?
230. What attitude was to prevail when offerings were made?
231. What was never to be eaten?
232. How could a Levite be forsaken?
233. Did God permit meat eating? (cf. verse 20) What of some present-day prohibitions of flesh eating?
234. What new rule for slaughtering animals is given verse 21?
235. How we need to believe God's will is both *good* and *right*. Cf. verse 28. What will help us understand this?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 12:1-28

These are the statutes and ordinances which you shall be watchful to do in the land, which the Lord, God of your fathers, gives you to possess all the day you live on the earth.

2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations you dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and the hills and under every green tree;

3 You shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place.

4 You shall not behave so toward the Lord your God.

5 But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name and make His dwelling-place, and there shall you come;

6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offering of your hands and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock;

7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

8 You \*shall not do according to all we do here [in the camp] this day, every man doing whatever looks right in his own eyes.

9 For you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God gives you.

10 But when you go over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causes you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety,

11 Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name [and His presence] to dwell there; to it you shall bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and what the hand presents [as a first gift from the fruits of the ground], and all your choicest offerings which you vow to the Lord.

12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, and your menservants and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your towns; since he has no part or inheritance with you.

13 Be watchful not to offer your burnt offerings in every place you see;

14 But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you.

15 However, you may kill and eat flesh in any of your towns, whenever you desire, according to the provision for the support of life with which the Lord your God has blessed you; those [ceremonially] unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the hart.

16 Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it upon the ground as water.

17 You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your oil or the firstlings of your herd or flock, or anything you have vowed, or your freewill offerings, or the offerings from your hand [of garden products].

18 But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God shall choose, you and your son and your

\* "It has been too much overlooked that the Law of Moses had a prophetic side. It was given to him and to Israel when they were not in a position to keep it [fully]. It was *the law of the land* which God would give them. In many ways its observance depended on the completion of the conquest of the land, and upon the quietness of the times in which they lived. This prophetic aspect was certainly not unrecognized by the Jews, or they would not (for example) have neglected to dwell in booths at the Feast of Tabernacles from the time of Joshua to Nehemiah. See Neh. 8:17." (*Ellicott's Commentary*.)

daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake.

19 Take heed not to forsake or neglect the Levite [God's minister] as long as you live in your land.

20 When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He promised you, and you say, I will eat flesh, because you crave flesh, you may eat flesh, whenever you desire.

21 If the place where the Lord your God has chosen to put His name [and presence] is too far from you, then you shall kill from your herd or flock which the Lord has given you, as I [Moses] have commanded you; eat in your towns as much as you desire.

22 Just as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it [but not offer it]; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.

23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life; and you may not eat the life with the flesh.

24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

25 You shall not eat it; that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

26 Only your holy things which you have [to offer], and what you have vowed, you shall take, and go to the place [before the sanctuary] which the Lord shall choose,

27 And offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, and you may eat the flesh.

28 Be watchful and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 12:1-28

Note here, that in anticipation of their stay in Canaan, God demands that Israel have one central sanctuary—his offerings are to be made in one place, and other offering places are to be destroyed (vv. 1-14). Then, in vv. 15-18 note that flesh, but *not the blood* nor consecrated things, could be eaten at home.

THE NATIONS . . . SERVED THEIR GODS, UPON THE HIGH MOUNTAINS, AND UPON THE HILLS, AND UNDER EVERY GREEN TREE (v. 2)—

Cf. Isa. 57:5, 7; Jer. 2:20, 3:6, 17:1, 2; Hos. 4:13; II K. 16:4, 17:10. "The heathen had their places of worship on lofty elevations, probably because they imagined they were thus nearer to the object of their worship; and they sought also the shade of woods, or thick-foliaged trees (Ezek. vi. 13), under which to perform their rites, as tending to inspire awe, and as in keeping with the mysterious character of their rites." (Pulpit Commentary)

AND YE SHALL BREAK DOWN THEIR ALTARS . . . etc. (v. 3)—Cf. 7:5 and notes. The destructive process was to be complete and total: AND YE SHALL DESTROY THEIR NAME OUT OF THAT PLACE. No vestige or reminder of idolatry and the carnal rites that accompanied such worship were to remain in the land. As we have already seen in the names Baal-peor and Beth-peor (3:29, 4:3, 46), the *names* traceable to the idolatry of the land were everywhere in Canaan. A check with a concordance will show many names with the prefix Baal—existing in the land when Israel conquered it. Clarke mentions that these names "were no doubt at first graven on the stones, and carved on the trees, and then applied to the surrounding districts. In various instances the names of whole mountains, valleys, and districts were borrowed from the gods worshipped there."

YE SHALL NOT DO SO UNTO JEHOVAH (v. 4)—i.e., he is not to be worshipped (formally) in *any place* you might deem convenient (v. 2) and certainly not in the *manner* the heathen do (v. 3).

BUT UNTO THE PLACE WHICH JEHOVAH YOUR GOD SHALL CHOOSE . . . (v. 5 ff)—"A particular place for the general rendezvous of all the tribes would be chosen by God himself; and the choice of one common place for the solemn rites of religion was an act of divine wisdom, for the security of true religion; it was admirably calculated to prevent the corruption which would otherwise have crept in from their frequenting groves and high hills—to preserve uniformity of worship, and keep alive their faith in Him to whom all their sacrifices pointed. The place was successively Mizpeh [or *Mizpah*, A.S.V., in Judah, near Gilgal; Judges 20:1, 5; I Sam. 7:5-9. Not to be confused with the Mizpah in Genesis, which was east of the Jordan], Shiloh [Josh. 18:1; Judges 18:31, 21:19; I Sam. 1:3], and especially Jerusalem [conquered by David, II Sam. 5:4-10, I Chron. 11:4-9]; but in all the references made to it by Moses, the name is never mentioned . . ." We can only conjecture at the reason for this silence. The above quote is taken from Robert Jamieson, who continues, "and this studied

silence was maintained partly lest the Canaanites within whose territories it lay might have concentrated their forces to frustrate all hopes of obtaining it; partly lest the desire of possessing a place of such importance might have become a cause of strife or rivalry amongst the Hebrew tribes, as about the appointment to the priesthood (Numbers 16)."

TO PUT HIS NAME THERE (v. 5)—i.e., the place God would designate as his special place of worship—eventually Jerusalem. See I K. 8:27-29; also II Chron. 7:11, 12, 15, 16. Back in Ex. 20:24 it was specified that an altar was to be built and sacrifices to be made "in every place where I record my name . . ."—i.e. any place where he specially manifests himself as present. The temple at Jerusalem was in later times known as the place of the name of Jehovah (Is. 18:7), the dwelling place of his glory (Ps. 26:8) The reference here, therefore, is quite *general*, and applies to *any* place where, by the Divine appointment, the tabernacle might be set up and the worship of Jehovah instituted.

THERE YE SHALL EAT (v. 7)—This statement, and the similar ones later in the chapter, are not incompatible with Num. 18:18, which specifies that the flesh of the sacrifices was to be given to the priest. An explanation is found in the Pulpit Commentary thus: "The animal belonged originally to the offerer; when he brought it before the Lord part of it was consumed on the altar, part of it was assigned to the priest, and the rest, as a matter of course, remained with himself. The law in Numbers, addressed to the priest, intimates what *he* might claim as his portion; the law in Deuteronomy, where the people are addressed, directs them how to use the portion that remained with *them*. It may be added that, even supposing that all the flesh was given to the priest, yet, as it had to be consumed on the day in which the sacrifice was offered, and as every clean person in the house might partake of it, it is almost certain that the offerer would, as a matter of course, share in the meal, as was usual in the case of sacrificed meals." McGarvey adds concerning both verses 6 and 7, "Here they are told to eat, but they are not told which they shall eat of the various offerings mentioned. We know, however, from other legislation, that they were not to eat of the burnt offerings, which were totally consumed on the altar. They were not to eat of the heave-offering, which was to be consumed by the priest and his family; and, if the law in Numbers had been already given, they were not to eat of the firstlings. But other legisla-

tion gave them the right to eat of the tithes, of the free-will offerings, and of the offerings in fulfillment of vows. When, then, they were told to bring all these offerings to the place that God would choose, and to eat there, they were necessarily restricted in their eating to these three classes of offerings, the others having been forbidden."

THE LEVITE . . . FORASMUCH AS HE HATH NO PORTION NOR INHERITANCE WITH YOU (v. 12)—See also vv. 18, 19, 26:11-13, 14:27, 10:9 and notes, and elsewhere in this chapter. Remarking on the statement about the Levites in v. 19, Clarke says, "These had no inheritance, and were to live by the sanctuary: if therefore the offerings were withheld by which the Levites were supported, they of course must perish. Those who have devoted themselves to the service of God in ministering to the salvation of the souls of men, should certainly be furnished at least with all the *necessaries* of life. Those who withhold this from them sin against their own mercies, and that ordinance of God by which a ministry is established for the salvation of souls.

OFFER NOT THY BURNT OFFERINGS IN EVERY PLACE THAT THOU SEEST (v. 13)—which was, of course, exactly what the heathens did in their idolatrous worship (v. 2). The period of Judges provides a grim commentary on the breaking of this command, for there, again and again Israel *did* "every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (v. 8, Cf. Judges 17:6, 21:25)—always to their degradation and shame. And even though they had no king in those days, the law of God had been given, and if it had been taught as it should have been (6:6-9) it would not have taken the brute force and legislation of a *king* to enforce it.

Mackintosh here gives us another of his many excellent remarks. Concerning the centralized worship so clearly demanded in this chapter, he says, "Here was *the* one grand and all-important point. It was the dwelling-place of Jehovah which was dear to the heart of every true Israelite. Restless self-will might desire to run hither and thither, the poor vagrant heart might long for some change, but, for the heart that loved God, any change from the place of His presence, the place where He had recorded His blessed name, could only be a change for the worse. The truly devout worshipper could find satisfaction and delight, blessing and rest, only in the place of the divine presence; and this, on the double ground,—the authority of His precious word and the powerful attractions of His presence. Such an one could never think of going anywhere else. Whither could he go? There was but one altar,



one habitation, one God—that was the place for every right-minded, every true-hearted Israelite. To think of any other place of worship would, in his judgment, be not only a departure from the word of Jehovah, but from His holy habitation.”

THOU MAYEST KILL AND EAT FLESH WITHIN ALL THY GATES (v. 15)— (also vv. 6, 17, 18). They were to beware of offering sacrifice in any place that might seem to them best; their offerings were to be presented only in that place which God should choose. But this did not imply that they were not to kill and eat in their own abodes whatever they desired for food. But . . .

YE SHALL NOT EAT THE BLOOD (v. 16, 23, 24). See also Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26, 17:10-14; Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29. Note the reason given: it contains the life. It is the life stream of the human body. No part of the body can live without this red fluid. It carries oxygen and food to every part of the body, fights disease, and helps the body get rid of wastes. Modern medicine would only “Amen” the statement of this verse, but witness the practice of bloodletting (the process of drawing blood from the body in treatment of disease) which surgeon-barbers practiced for so many years—a practice which usually only weakened the body. (Polycythemia, a disease in which the blood cells grow too rapidly, is one of the few maladies that is today treated by bloodletting).

The fact that the life is in the blood cannot, of course be separated from the grand plan of the redemption of the world through the Saviour. Shedding his *blood* in the sacrifice of himself, he gave his *perfect life* for our sinful ones.

THOU MAYEST NOT EAT WITHIN THY GATES THE TITHE OF THY GRAIN, etc. (v. 17)—This was not to say they could not also partake of such items when they brought them in as offerings (Note vv. 6, 7, 18, 26) but they were not to do so “within thy gates.”

“These are the offerings which they would be most tempted to partake of at their homes; and this accounts for the repetition. It seems from this that, while not commanded to eat of the firstlings, they were permitted to do so [See 15:19-23]. The case, then, is like that of the tithes, which though given to the Levites, the giver was permitted to have one feast from them with the Levites, at the time of delivering them to the latter. This provision is not contradictory to the one that gave the firstlings to the priests, but an addition to it by

which the offered was permitted to have one feast with the priests who received them" . . .

"It provided only for a single meal out of the tithe before it was left for the Lord's ministry—the priests and Levites . . . [And here McGarvey refers to a custom of his day that, with the details altered, still exists among many churches]. "There is a custom in modern times, though not known in the established churches of the Old World, which illustrates the sacred feasts of Deuteronomy. The members of a congregation often gather at the house of the minister, bringing with them various articles of food to supply his storeroom for months to come; yet the whole company remains to have a feast with the family out of what has been brought. The feast adds a charm to the occasion, and increases the good will of both the givers and the receiver. Such was the evident intention of the feast given on the occasion of delivering the tithe to the Levites" (McGarvey *Authorship*, pp. 102, 103, 64, 67).

FORSAKE NOT THE LEVITE (v. 19)—See also v. 12, notes; 14:27. As we have already seen, the Levites had no property *as a tribe*, though they did have towns allotted to them among the different tribes. (Num. 35)—forty-eight cities with their "suburbs" (pasture-lands), including the six cities of refuge. Thus they were dispersed throughout the land and are described as "within the gates" of the rest of the people.

Dependent as they were upon Israel for support, what could they do if it was *withheld*? "All depended on the conscientiousness of the individual tithe-payer. It is easy to see that an income of this sort was in the highest degree precarious, and that in times of religious declension, the body of the Levites would be reduced to great straits. These facts sufficiently account for the reiterated injunctions not to forsake the Levite, but to include him in every festive gathering. Three reasons for his liberal support: 1. His calling deprived him of the usual means of livelihood. 2. His office was one of service for the people. 3. His relation to the altar made neglect shown to him a dishonour done to God." (J. Orr, in *Pulpit Com.*).

Paul's application to the Christian ministry (I Cor. 9:6-14) is obvious. The principle is, that if a man *gives his* life to a particular pursuit, is it asking too much if he derives a decent *living* from that work, and from the people *served* in that work? Some ministers (as Paul) may be able to resort to some kind of secular labor with relative ease and little hindrance to their ministry, especially when a wife and children are not being supported by their income. But how often *today*

it is true that a minister has so devoted himself to study, prayer, and the ministry of the word (cf. Acts 6:4) that he is virtually unable to support himself and his family except *by this means*. And what if the volunteer and generous support of the church fails? Frequently, it means embarrassment, humiliation, and a lowering of his office in the eyes of the community. It is honorable for anyone to "labor, working with his hands the thing that is good," but how much *more* honorable when those who *deserve* the support of "the Israel of God," his church, receive those material things necessary to live respectfully in a community. "Are you ignorant of the fact that those who minister sacred things take part of the sacred food of the Temple for their own use, and those who attend the altar have their share of what is placed on the altar? On the same principle the Lord has ordered that those who proclaim the Gospel should receive their livelihood from those who accept the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:13, 14, J.B. Phillips). "Forsake not the Levite,"—nor his present-day counterpart!

IF THE PLACE WHICH JEHOVAH THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE . . . BE TOO FAR FROM THEE, etc. (v. 21, see also 14:22-27)—In Lev. 17:3 ff. it is specified that every animal designed for food, whether ox, goat, or lamb, was during the abode in the wilderness ordered to be slain as a peace offering *at the door of the tabernacle*. Its blood was to be sprinkled, and its fat burnt upon the altar by the priest. The encampment, being then round about the altar, made this practice (probably commanded to prevent idolatry) easy and practical. But on their arrival in Canaan the obligation to slay *at the tabernacle* was to be dispensed with, and the people left at liberty to prepare their meat in their own homes, if necessary.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWELVE

*All monuments of idolatry in the promised land to be destroyed, 1-3; and God's service to be duly performed, 4-7. The difference between the performance of that service in the wilderness and in the promised land, 8-11. The people are to be happy in all their religious observances, 12. The offerings must be brought to the place which God appoints, and no blood is to be eaten, 13-16. The tithe of corn, wine, oil, &c., to be eaten in the place that God shall choose, 17, 18. The Levite must not be forsaken, 19. All clean beasts may be eaten, but the blood must be poured out before the Lord, and be eaten on no pretence whatever, 20-25. Of vows, burnt-offerings, &c., 26, 27. These*

*precepts are to be carefully obeyed, 28. Cautions against the abominations of the heathen, 29-31. Nothing to be added to or diminished from the word of God. 32.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON NINE (12:1-28)

1. Where were the various places the heathen might worship?
2. The destruction of idolatry and heathen practices was to be so complete, Moses said "Ye shall destroy their \_\_\_\_\_ out of that place."
3. Why have a centralized worship?
4. Their place of sacrifice was to be "the place which Jehovah your God shall choose . . ." What place is mentioned in Deuteronomy? It was, successively, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. How do you reconcile the statements of scripture that specify in one place the tithes and offerings are to be the *priests'*, and elsewhere that "thou shalt eat the flesh"?
6. Suppose a man felt, in his own considered judgment, that it was not expedient or convenient to worship in the place which Jehovah chose? What then?
7. Suppose a man lived a long way from the designated place of sacrifice. What provision was made for him? Did he have to go to the designated place at all?
8. What part (s) of the sacrificial victim could *not* be eaten?
9. What reason is given for this?
10. What harm would result if the Levite was forsaken? How does Paul apply this principle?



*Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim*

*Deut. 11, 29*

## LESSON TEN 12:29—13:18; 17:2-13

### 2. ONE GOD: DEATH PENALTIES FOR APOSTASY

(12:29—13:18; 17:2-13)

29 When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest in to dispossess them, and thou dispossesest them, and dwellest in their land; 30 take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them, after that they are destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31 Thou shalt not do so unto Jehovah thy God; for every abomination to Jehovah, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods.

32 What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

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If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams: for Jehovah your God proveth you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7 of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; 8 thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: 9 but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to

put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 And thou shalt stone him to death with stones, because he hath sought to draw thee away from Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is in the midst of thee.

12 If thou shalt hear tell concerning one of thy cities, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to dwell there, saying, 13 Certain base fellows are gone out from the midst of thee, and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; 14 then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in the midst of thee, 15 thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. 16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, unto Jehovah thy God: and it shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again. 17 And there shall cleave nought of the devoted thing to thy hand; that Jehovah may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18 when thou shalt hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:29—13:18

236. After destroying idol worship why would anyone be ensnared in it?
237. Are we to infer that these idolators had had opportunity to know the one true God and had steadfastly refused to worship Him? or that they were being slain in their ignorance?
238. Are we to understand from verse 2 that certain false prophets can perform a sign of wonder?
239. Explain in your own words just how God "tested" some persons. Cf. verses 3 and 4.
240. Why not preach to some of these idolators?
241. Specify what was so attractive in the worship of these "other gods" that some would be willing to risk their very lives for the worship of them.

242. What lesson for love, hatred, right, wrong, are in the example of killing your own loved ones because of idolatry?
243. If such stringent measures were taken by Israel, how often would they be repeated? As to the use of a preventive measure how could the fewest lives be lost and still preserve the worship of Jehovah?
244. Please do enough research to discover the total procedure involved before passing the death penalty upon an individual or a city. Cf. 17:2-7; 19:15-19; Leviticus 24:10-14; Josua 8:4-7.
245. Are there lessons here for present-day church discipline? Cf. Matthew 18:15-20; Luke 17:3, 4; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19, 20.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 12:29—13:18

29 When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go to dispossess, and you dispossess them and live in their land,

30 Be watchful that you are not ensnared into following them after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise.

31 You shall not do so to the Lord your God; for every abominable thing which the Lord hates they have done for their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire of their gods.

32 Whatever I command you, be watchful to do it; you shall not add to it or diminish it.

If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder,

2 And the sign or the wonder he foretells to you comes to pass, and if he says, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,

3 You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being.

4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and (reverently) fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and cling to Him.

5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has talked rebellion and turning away from the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you

out of the house of bondage; that man has tried to draw you aside from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So shall you put the evil away from your midst.

6 If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend, who is as your own life, entice you secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known, you nor your fathers;

7 Of the gods of the peoples who are round about you, near you or far away from you, from one end of the earth to the other,

8 You shall not consent to him, or listen to him; nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him;

9 But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10 And you shall stone him to death with stones, because he has tried to draw you away from the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11 And all Israel shall hear, (and reverently) fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this among you.

12 If you hear it said in one of your cities, which the Lord your God has given you in which to dwell,

13 That certain base fellows have gone out from your midst, and have enticed away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

14 Then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be true and certain that such an abominable thing has been done among you,

15 You shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all who are in it, and its beasts, with the edge of the sword.

16 And you shall collect all its spoil into the midst of its open square, and shall burn the city with fire, with every bit of its spoil [as a whole burnt offering] to the Lord your God; it shall be a heap [of ruins] for ever; it shall not be built again.

17 And nothing of the accursed thing shall cling to your hand; that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger, and show you mercy, and have compassion on you, and multiply you, as He swore to your fathers,

18 If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you this day, to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord your God.



## COMMENT 12:29—13:18

Note that in these verses we have

- (1) Warnings against being seduced and ensnared into idolatrous practices (12:29-32)
- (2) Idolatrous prophets and dreamers to be slain (13:1-5)
- (3) Idolatrous relatives and friends to be slain (13:6-11)
- (4) Idolatrous cities to be destroyed and their inhabitants slain (13:12-18)

Thus this *entire section* is concerned with cautions and warnings about being led away into *idolatry*.

INQUIRE NOT AFTER THEIR GODS, SAYING, HOW DO THESE NATIONS SERVE THEIR GODS? EVEN SO WILL I DO LIKEWISE (v. 30)—There is always a danger in the process of *informing oneself* of something that is evil. The motives (at first) may be ever so pure—perhaps to gain information for the purpose of helping someone *in* a false religious system. But, all too often, there is a foggy and ethereal line between such a person's *information* and his own *beliefs*. What he *knows* he tends to *believe*—whether right or wrong. We would not stifle an investigating spirit and an inquisitive mind. Only let that mind be first firmly established in Christ, and the *motives* for investigation be an ever more useful service to *Christ*. These inspired—but with a sensual heart! Doubtless they wanted the "lowdown" on all the immoral and godless rites the heathen practiced—so they could try *their* hand at it!

FOR EVEN THEIR SONS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS DO THEY BURN IN THE FIRE TO THEIR GODS (v. 31)—See also 18:9-12, Ps. 106:34-37, Ezek. 16:20, 21. This was practiced in the worship of several gods in the areas surrounding Israel, especially Molech (Moloch, Milcom), Lev. 18:21, 20:1-5; II K. 23:10—the national god of the Ammonites, and Chemosh, the national god of the Moabites, I K. 11:7, Cf. II K. 3:27; and apparently Baal, II K. 17:16, 17.

AND THE SIGN OR THE WONDER COME TO PASS (v. 2)—Note that whether the prediction of this "Seer" comes to pass or not is not the *only* criterion to be used to establish his identity as a true or false prophet. He is to be judged by the law of God *per se*—claims, "proofs," and "confirmations" notwithstanding. A false prophet's predictions are not *always* wrong—if they were, *nobody* would believe them! See 18:9-22, notes. Paul certainly recognized the great influence of "*he*,

whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders . . ." (II Thes. 2:9). Other examples could be given, such as Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3:8, Cf. Ex. 7:8-13, 20-22; 8:6, 7). The question is not "Did they perform a miracle?" but "Are they furthering and promoting the teachings and will of *Christ*?" See II Cor. 11:10-15, Matt. 7:15-23, I Jn. 4:1. Someone might ask "Why would God allow the false prophet's prophecy to be fulfilled?" The next verse in our text provides the answer:

FOR JEHOVAH YOUR GOD PROVETH YOU (v. 3)—i.e., is testing or trying you (Heb. *nasah*, as in 8:2). How many could learn from this truth in our present age if they would take it to heart! Why quibble and forever argue with these who saw some present day Simon giving out that he is "some great one," and causing multitudes to cry out, "This man is that power of God which is called Great" (Acts 8:9, 10)? If we are to "prove the spirits, whether they are of God" because "many false prophets are gone out into the world" what *means* shall we use? "To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isa. 8:20).

THAT PROPHET, OR THAT DREAMER OF DREAMS, SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH, BECAUSE HE HATH SPOKEN REBELLION (v. 5)—See also v. 9, 17:2-7, 18:20-22. The Heb. word *sarah* ("rebellion") is variously rendered. The A.V. has "to turn you away . . .," a rendering that Gesenius seemingly confirms by his definition, "prop. a *departing, withdrawing*; hence (1) the *violation* of a law, an offence, Deut. 19:16 [where it is rendered "wrong doing"]. (2) *departure from Jehovah*, Deut. 13:6". Baumgartner has "*rebellion . . . obstinancy*," and specifically "incite rebellion against". As a deceiver, he was to be put to death.

IF THY BROTHER . . . SON . . . DAUGHTER . . . WIFE . . . FRIEND . . . ENTICE THEE SECRETLY . . . THOU SHALT SURELY KILL HIM (vv. 6-11)—See also 17:2-7. At least two witnesses were required, and death was to be by stoning. This command is obviously stated as it is because of the great temptation to be lenient and lax about carrying out God's law with regard to transgressors close and dear to them. Read v. 8 again! Their enticement would be "secretly," (Heb. *sether*) and doubtless subtle and plausible!

THY HAND SHALL BE FIRST UPON HIM (v. 9)—In executing the laws of Israel wherein someone was worthy of death, the accuser-witness was to be the first to lay his hands on the guilty party, and to cast

the first stone. See 17:7, 19:15-19, Lev. 24:10-14, and compare the wording of Jn. 8:4-7.

This would tend to prevent off-hand, haphazard or flippant accusations. The accuser had to have the courage and strength of conviction to "follow through" with his charges. If not, he was *not to make any charges*. The principle involved could be well-received by many today.

We do not of course have any such death-penalty law in "the Israel of God," the church of the Lord. However, the principle of the accuser-witness *instigating the corrective action*, is definitely taught by Christ: (Matt. 18:15-20; Lk. 17:3, 4; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19, 20) not only if he realizes his *brother* has sinned, but if he realizes *he* has sinned *against his brother* (Matt. 5:23-26). The principle is, that if something is seen or realized as in need of correction or forgiveness, immediate action should be initiated toward that end.

THOU SHALT SURELY SMITE THE INHABITANTS OF THAT CITY (v. 15)—But not before a careful investigation was made (v. 14). Note how it all began. "Certain base fellows" influenced the city like leaven, and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Margin, Heb. *sons of worthlessness*, and expression meaning those *totally worthless or devoted to worthless ends*. Cf. "sons of disobedience," Eph. 2:2).

— 17:2-13 —

2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, then shalt thou inquire diligently; and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, 5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who hath done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them to death with stones. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke,

being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; 9 and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days: and thou shalt inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. 10 And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee, 11 according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. 12 And the man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:2-13

246. Who is to prefer charges against the idolator?
247. Why not punish a man with only one witness? Supposing the idolator was sincere in his worship; was he yet to be put to death?
248. What is meant by the expression "blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke"?
249. What is involved in the terrible sin of presumption? Is not this a present-day problem? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 17:2-13

2 If there is found among you, within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you, a man or woman who does what is wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, by transgressing His covenant,

3 Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or moon or any of the host of the heavens, which I have forbidden,

4 And it is told that you hear of it; then inquire diligently, and if it is certainly true that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

5 Then you shall bring forth to your town's gates that man or woman who has done that wicked thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death.

6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses, he who is worthy of death shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between one kind of bloodshed and another, between one legality and another, between one kind of assault and another, matters of controversy within your towns, then arise and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses,

9 And you shall come to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall make clear to you the decision.

10 And you shall do according to the decision which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses, and you shall be watchful to do according to all that they tell you;

11 According to the decision of the law which they shall teach you, and the judgment which they shall announce to you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the verdict they give you, either to the right hand or the left.

12 The man who does presumptuously, and will not listen to the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or to the judge, that man shall die; so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and not act presumptuously again.

### COMMENT 17:2-13

We have included this passage with the section above because of its obvious similarity and because it treats the same subject. God had said to have "no other gods before (besides) me" nor to make any graven image (5:7-10). He had also strictly forbidden the worship of any creature, star, planet, etc. (4:15-19 and notes). Here it will be seen that the same method of procedure was to follow the punishment of transgressors as we have just noted in chapter 13. One witness was not enough for the death sentence, (Cf. Num. 35:30) and the witnesses had to have reputations for reliability (19:15-21). (Naboth, for example, had two "base fellows" witness against him, I K. 21:10, 13). In matters of discipline in the New Testament church, two or more witnesses are also required (Matt. 18:15-18).

IF THERE ARISE A MATTER TOO HARD FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT (v. 8)—See also 1:9-18, 19:16-19, 25:1-3, and also Ex. 18:13-26. The passages in Ex. 18 and Deut. 1 (which speak of the same instance) do not specify that the *judges themselves* had to be priests or Levites. In fact, the Exodus passage seems definitely to specify that Moses' choices for these officers were not limited to one tribe: "And Moses chose able men out of all Israel . . . and they judged the people . . ." Furthermore, Deut. 17:9 and 19:17 seem to carefully distinguish between the *priests* (who of course were always Levites) and the Judges, who might have been from *any* tribe of Israel.

AND THOU SHALT COME UNTO THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES, AND UNTO THE JUDGE (v. 9)—"In all such cases [Cf. v. 8] recourse was to be had to the court at the sanctuary—to the priests the Levites,' i.e. the priests who were of the tribe of Levi, and the judge presiding there—the lay judge associated with the high priest as president . . ." (Pulpit Com.)

AND THOU SHALT DO ACCORDING TO THE TENOR OF THE SENTENCE (v. 10)—Cf. v. 12, which enacts the death penalty for THE MAN THAT DOETH PRESUMPTUOUSLY in not obeying the judge and the priest. The Hebrew word *zid* is defined by Baumgartner's *Lexicon* as "insolent, presumptuous, . . . boundless insolence" and by Gesenius, "*swelling, pride*; as joined with insolence and arrogance [here], haughtiness". It ought to be seen from all this that this judicial method was not intended as any "kangaroo court" by God! The decisions made by these appointed men were to be *listened to and obeyed*.

Much, of course, is left *unsaid* in these verses which could perhaps be profitably discussed. For example, to what *extent* did God personally and miraculously *guide* these judges and priests? Did the priests employ the Urim and Thummim in making such judgments?

In the theocracy Israel was under, there was little distinction between "ecclesiastical" and "civil" cases. The priests no doubt specialized as expounders and judges of cases involving *the law*, but the lay judges were not "added" to the court, to be judges of the facts in distinction from the law in the case.

It is debatable whether the judges to whom Israel came for judgment during that era of history known as the Period of Judges (Judges 2:16-19, 3:10, 4:4, 5, 10:2, etc.) represent "the judge that shall be in those days" (v. 9). If so, they took on far different responsibilities than anything mentioned here, for *they* were chiefly military men raised

up to deliver Israel from his enemies—a task never assigned to *these* judges.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*Of false prophets and their lying signs, 1-6. Of those who endeavour to entice and seduce people to idolatry, 7, 8. The punishment of such, 9-11. Of cities perverted from the pure worship of God, 12-14. How that city is to be treated, 15. All the spoil of it to be destroyed, 16. Promises to them who obey these directions, 17, 18.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON TEN (12:29—13:18; 17:2-13)

1. We should all have inquiring minds. What danger is to be avoided in cultivating such in religious matters?
2. What godless practice of the idolators is mentioned in the closing verses of chapter 12?
3. What is the one and only true criterion by which a prophet must be judged?
4. What is the context and reason for the phrase, "for Jehovah your God proveth you," as it occurs in chapter 13?
5. What was the penalty against the prophet that spoke against Jehovah?
6. What class or group of people would especially try to lead other Israelites into idolatry? How were such to be treated?
7. Let us suppose you are an Israelite and found another man practicing idolatry. Describe the legal procedure necessary to effect the death penalty.
8. Who was to throw the first rock?
9. How might a *whole city* be found practicing idolatry? What influenced it?
10. How was such a city to be punished?
11. How many years could elapse before the city could be rebuilt?
12. What penalty was in order for those who worshipped heavenly bodies?
13. In an appointed place, matters of difficult decision were to be brought before whom? How was their decision to be received?
14. Was "civil" and "ecclesiastical" law carefully distinguished in Israel?

## LESSON ELEVEN 14:1-21

### 3. ONE HOLY PEOPLE, DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHERS (14:1—25:19)

#### a. DISFIGUREMENT FOR THE DEAD FORBIDDEN (14:1, 2)

Ye are the children of Jehovah your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, and Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:1, 2

250. Why the strange prohibition in verse 1? Cf. Leviticus 21:5; Ezekial 44:20.  
251. Read I Peter 2:9-12 and compare our status with Israel.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:1, 2

You are the sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves, or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead.

2 For you are a holy people (set apart) to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a peculiar people to Himself, above all the nations on the earth.

### COMMENT 14:1, 2

See also Lev. 21:5, Ezek 44:20. The message seems to be especially directed to the priests.

The heathen apparently had the practice of both shaving their heads and cutting themselves in mourning for their dead. "You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead" (The Torah). They were not only to abstain from idolatry, but also to avoid all heathen practices connected with those who *were* idolators.

V. 2 gives the *reason* for the different type of life they are to lead. Note it carefully! The surrounding nations might become progressively worse, but *God's* people are different! They are governed and regulated (inwardly it was hoped, as well as outwardly) by different standards! They are the ones chosen of God for his own possession! Let them live, then, as the *children of God* and not the sons of Belial. Cf. 7:6, Ex. 19:5, 6.



New Testament writers speak of the church as "The Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), and his people, as his own possession, are still to show forth the glories of their owner, master, and savior. See I Pet. 2:9-12.

#### b. THEIR DIET A CONSTANT REMINDER (14:3-21)

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4 These are the beasts which ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 the hart, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the antelope, and the chamois. 6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and hath the hoof cloven in two, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. 7 Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that have the hoof cloven: the camel, and the hare, and the coney; because they chew the cud but part not the hoof, they are unclean unto you. 8 And the swine, because he parteth the hoof but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you: of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch.

9 These ye may eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales may ye eat; 10 and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean unto you.

11 Of all clean birds ye may eat. 12 But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the gier-eagle, and the osprey, 13 and the glade, and the falcon, and the kite after its kind, 14 and every raven after its kind, 15 and the ostrich, and the night-hawk after its kind, 16 the little owl, and the great owl, and the horned owl, 17 and the pelican, and the vulture, and the cormorant, 18 and the stork, and the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. 19 And all winged creeping things are unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20 Of all clean birds ye may eat.

21 Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner: for thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:3-21

252. Why was God interested in the diet of His people?
253. What two qualifications were involved with the "clean" animal?
254. Name the two qualifications for the clean fish.
255. What one great lesson is taught in all these prohibitions?

256. Identify: pygarg; chamois; coney; glede; hoopoe.

257. Why not "boil a kid in its mother's milk"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:3-21

3 You shall not eat anything that is abominable [to the Lord and so forbidden by Him].

4 These are the beasts which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

5 The hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

6 And every beast that parts the hoof and has it divided into two, and brings up and chews the cud, among the beasts, you may eat.

7 Yet these you shall not eat of those that chew the cud or have the hoof split in two: the camel, the hare, and the coney, because they chew the cud but divide not the hoof; they are unclean to you.

8 And the swine, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you; you shall not eat of their flesh, or touch their dead bodies.

9 These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales you may eat;

10 And whatsoever has not fins and scales you may not eat; it is unclean to you.

11 Of all clean birds you may eat.

12 But these are they of which you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the ospray,

13 The buzzard, the kite in its several species,

14 The raven in all its species,

15 The ostrich, the night-hawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any variety,

16 the little owl, the great owl, the horned owl,

17 The Pelican, the carion vulture, the cormorant,

18 The stork, the heron of any variety, the hoopoe, and the bat.

19 And all flying insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20 But of all clean winged things you may eat.

21 You shall not eat of anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the stranger or the foreigner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to an alien; [they are not under God's law in this matter] but you are a people holy to the Lord your God. You shall not [even] boil a kid in its mother's milk.

## COMMENT 14:3-21

See also the entire 11th chapter of Leviticus. Of animals, it was necessary that they *both* chew the cud and part the hoof before they could be eaten. Meeting half the qualifications would not do.

Among fish or marine life, it was necessary that it have both fins and scales. Again, *both* qualifications had to be met to be acceptable.

This passage has often been studied with the idea that God forbade the eating of certain animal-life and allowed the eating of others because of their intrinsic health (or nutritional) value, or lack of it. (And, of course, *many* "unclean" animals *are* rather repulsive to *most* of us! Have you ever tried broiled night-hawk? Or how about a nice plump bat? Or what about a few other "winged creeping things" we might find flying or crawling around?).

But I firmly believe the real reason for the prohibitions and allowances of these verses is not found in the *apparent* nutritional or health-giving benefits of "clean" animals over the "unclean." Rattlesnake steaks or slices of eel meat may be repulsive to many, but the meat is perfectly edible if properly prepared. As a student in Bible College, this writer several times resorted to eating inexpensive horse and colt steaks, which really weren't injurious.

The prohibitions and distinctions given here were rather for the purpose of teaching *obedience*, and to show that Israel was a *separate people*, different from all other nations (v. 2).

THOU SHALT NOT EAT ANY ABOMINABLE THING (v. 3)—i.e. any thing God had pronounced unclean, or forbidden. Originally, (or at least after the flood) there had been no such restriction. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb [Cf. Gen. 1:29, 30] have I given you all" (Gen. 9:3). Our present scripture, as part of the Mosaic law, was a temporary and provisional one. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:4, 5). See also Mk. 7:17-19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:2, 3, 14, 20; I Cor. 6:12-14, 8:8, 10:25, 26, 30, 31; Col. 2:16, 17; I Tim. 4:1-5. As far as the true religion of *God* is concerned, there are no prohibitions upon eating flesh, providing it is not a cause of stumbling. The New Testament of course, does not discuss individual cases, doctor's recommendations, etc. *Any* thing that is harmful to the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, is forbidden by the principle set forth in I Cor. 6:19, 20.

**PYGARG** (v. 5)—a kind of antelope, perhaps the addax, an antelope of Arabia and North Africa, with long loosely spiraled horns. Others believe it to be the *ibex*.

**CHAMOIS** (v. 5)—pronounced *shámi*. This is a small, goatlike antelope that lives now in the high mountains of Europe and south-western Asia, known for its agility in climbing steep cliffs. The chamois skin (or "shammy leather") which is still used widely for cleaning, polishing, or erasing blackboards, came originally from this animal. But most of those presently in use are from the skin of sheep or goats.

**THE CONEY** (v. 7)—The Hebrew word *shaphan* "is now universally considered to refer to the Syrian hyrox" (I:S:B:E:); found not only in Syria, but Palestine and Arabia. A number of other species including several that are arboreal (living among and in trees), are found in Africa. They are not found elsewhere. Their appearance more resembles a squirrel than a rabbit, though they are often associated with the latter animal. They frequently make their homes among rocks (Prov. 30:26; Ps. 104:18) which is why they are sometimes called rock-badgers (Lev. 11:5, Margin).

**GIER-EAGLE** (v. 12)—Most modern versions have "vulture."

**GLEDE** (v. 13)—a member of the hawk species. The English word is akin to *glide* (and is synonymous with kite), emphasizing its gliding motion in flight. The Heb. word is *ra-ab*, a word frequently rendered *see*, *perceive*, etc. Baumgartner says "*Red Kite . . . on account of its sharp sight.*"

**KITE** (v. 13)—Heb. *ayyah*, another bird noted for its keen sight, supposedly having exceptionally piercing eyes. "It takes moles, mice, young game birds, snakes, and frogs, as well as carrion for food. Its head and facial expression are unusually eagle-like" (I.S.B.E.). Gesenius: "some unclean *clamorous bird*, to which very great acuteness of sight is attributed, Job 28:7 ["falcon"] . . ."

**SEAMBW** (v. 15)—the A.V. has *cuckow*. The Hebrew word *shachaph* probably signifies a *seagull*.

**HOOPOE** (v. 18)—The A.V. has *lapwing* (a plover) now universally admitted to be incorrect. The hoopoe (Heb. *dukhiphath*) is one of the peculiar and famous birds of Palestine, having a long curved

bill and beautiful plumage. About the size of a thrush, it has a crest of feathers of gold. Its body is of mixed cinnamon-gold color, with black and white stripes across the back, tail, and wings. It nests in holes and hollow trees. "All ornithologists agree that it is a 'nasty filthy bird' in its feeding and breeding habits. The nest, being paid no attention by the elders, soon becomes soiled and evil smelling" (I.S.B.E.). It was one of the sacred birds of Egypt, where magical powers were attributed to it. In Southern Europe it is killed in migration, eaten and considered delicious. The word "hoopoe" sounds like its call.

YE SHALL NOT EAT OF ANY THING THAT DIETH OF ITSELF (v. 21)—In Lev. 17:14, 15 this law is in a context forbidding the eating of blood, and the connection is easily seen. The prohibition here would help prevent any possibility of transgressing the former one. The blood of an animal that so died (Heb. carcass) would soon coagulate, preventing draining. See also Lev. 22:8, 7:24, 11:39, 40. Health reasons may also be involved in this law.

THOU SHALT NOT BOIL A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK (v. 21)—Also in Ex. 23:19, 34:26. This prohibition seems to be connected with magical superstitions. It appears that it was the custom of certain heathens, after they had gathered in their fruits, to take the milk of the dam after it had been used to boil its kid, and then, in a magical way to sprinkle it over their trees, fields, gardens, and orchards. Supposedly this would make them more fruitful the following year.

But it is equally probable "that the act was condemned as an outrage on the connection naturally subsisting between parent and offspring. It is thus related to the commands forbidding the killing of a cow and calf on the same day (Lev. xxii. 28), or the taking of a bird with its young (ch. xxii. 6), and to the precepts enjoining a scrupulous regard for natural distinctions—not sowing a field with mingled seed, etc. (Lev. xix. 19). . . . The lesson is that everything is to be avoided which would tend to blunt our moral sensibilities" (Pulpit). Clarke's thought is similar: ". . . the simple object of the precept seems to be this: 'Thou shalt do nothing that may have any tendency to blunt thy moral feelings, or teach thee hardness of heart.' Even *human* nature shudders at the thought of causing the mother to lend her milk to seethe [boil] the flesh of her young one! We need go no farther for the delicate, tender, humane, and impressive meaning of this precept."

## QUESTIONS, LESSON ELEVEN (14:1-21)

1. What *reason* does God give for not cutting themselves, etc., for the dead?
2. What qualifications made an animal clean?
3. What if half the qualification was met?
4. What made a fish (or other marine life) clean?
5. Again, what if half the qualification was met?
6. Why all this *forbidding* (and in other cases *allowing*) on the part of God? Was there any "moral" to it?
7. Briefly, discuss what the New Testament teaches on this subject (questions 2-6).
8. Give a possible reason for God forbidding the eating of an animal not slaughtered (a carcass).
9. Give a possible reason for not boiling a kid in its mother's milk.

*The Owl and Hawk**Deut. 14, 15-16*

## LESSON TWELVE 14:22—15:23

### c. DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMIC PRACTICES (14:22—15:23)

22 Thou shalt surely tithe all the increase of thy seed, that which cometh forth from the field year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before Jehovah thy God, in the place which he shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock; that thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God always. 24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, because the place is too far from thee, which Jehovah thy God shalt choose, to set his name there, when Jehovah thy God shall bless thee; 25 then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose: 26 and thou shalt bestow the money for whatsoever thy soul desireth, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul asketh of thee; and thou shalt eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household. 27 And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of every three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: 29 and the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:22-29

258. What would happen to ten-percent of the see? To whom was it given? What use was made of it?
259. How could the tithe be given to the Lord if it was eaten by the worshipper?
260. Why would the exception of verses 24, 25 help some of the twelve tribes?
261. Does verse 26 give permission for the drinking of strong drink? Discuss.
262. Explain the special provision made in verses 28 and 29.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:22-29

22 You shall surely tithe all the yield of your seed, produced by your field each year.

23 And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place in which He will cause His name [and presence] to dwell, the tithe (tenth) of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and your flock, that you may learn (reverently) to fear the Lord your God always.

24 And if the distance is too long for you to carry your tithe, or the place where the Lord your God chooses to set His name [and presence] is too far away for you, when the Lord your God has blessed you,

25 Then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and shall go to the place [of worship] which the Lord your God has chosen;

26 And you may spend that money for whatever your appetite craves, for oxen, or sheep, or new wine or stronger drink, or whatever you desire; and you shall eat there before the Lord your God, you and your household.

27 And you shall not forsake or neglect the Levite [God's minister] in your towns, for he has been given no share or inheritance with you.

28 At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your increase the same year, and lay it up within your towns;

29 And the Levite [because he has no part or inheritance with you], and the stranger or temporary resident, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are in your towns, shall come and eat and be satisfied; that the Lord Your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

## COMMENT 14:22-29

**TITHE . . . FROM THE FIELD YEAR BY YEAR** (v. 22)—The produce of the soil is to be tithed each year. This was to be brought to the central sanctuary—"the place which he [God] shall choose" (v. 23). There, the giver would share in a sacrificial feast with the Levites (See chapter 12). Obviously, the giver was not to eat *all* the tithe, as some have erroneously implied. If a man's little farm yielded barely enough to feed his family, this interpretation of the law would require him to eat up at one feast what would keep his family for *five weeks!* The law allowed for this single meal *from* the tithe, before it was given into the care of the priests and Levites. ". . . simply providing that, when the farmer came up annually with his tithe and his firstlings, he should unite with the beneficiaries of it in a feast on part of it ere he left the remainder for its appointed purpose. It was a very wise provision;



because it had the tendency to make the giver part from his gifts more cheerfully." (McGarvey). He continues, "There is still another reason, a very imperative one, for thus understanding the law. If the whole tithe were to be eaten at one feast, the Levite would certainly be well stuffed at the time, but what provision would this be for the rest of the year? He would have nothing to eat except when he could find some farmer coming up with his tithe, and there would be intervals of feasting and longer ones of fasting throughout the year—a mode of living not conducive to good health or long life."

We now must ask the question, how many tithes did the faithful Israelite give to the Lord? Albert Barnes, commenting on Matt. 23:23, states, "The law requires the Jews to devote a tenth part of all their property to the support of the Levites, Num. xviii. 20-24. Another tenth part they paid for the service of the sanctuary, commonly in cattle and grain, but where they lived far from the place of worship they changed it to money, De. xiv. 22-24. Besides these, there was to be every third year a tenth part given to the poor, to be eaten in their own dwellings (De. xiv. 28, 29); so that nearly one-third of the property of the Jews was devoted to religious services by law. This was besides the voluntary offerings which they made."

This quote represents a fairly common and popular concept. But as we have already seen, the latter part of it is obviously erroneous. The three-year tithe of vv. 28, 29 was not solely for the poor, but simply *provided* for them.

Now the question as to whether our present scripture is a "second tithe"—additional to that given in Numbers and Leviticus: We see no need of so understanding it. It appears, rather, that the differences that are here are rather to be considered as further stages of *legislation*, particularly in view of the fact that (excepting the three-year tithe) no mention is made of more tithes than one. This, of course, does not include the many special and free-will offerings (Mal. 3:8), sacrifices, etc. See below.

THE FIRSTLINGS OF THY HERD AND OF THY FLOCK (v. 23)—These were God's (Num. 18:15-17, Ex. 34:19). See 12:6, 15:19-23 and notes.

STRONG DRINK (v. 26)—Heb. *shecar* (akin to our word *cider*) defined by Gesenius, "strong drink, intoxicating liquor," mentioning that it might be made from barley, honey, grapes or dates, but usually distinguished from wine, as, of course, it is here. The word appears in

a similar connection in Num. 28:7. In Lange's commentary, A. Gosman remarks, "The distinction here is not between two kinds of wine, one intoxicating and the other not, but between wine and a drink made from some other substance than the grape; from honey or barley."

AT THE END OF THREE YEARS THOU SHALT BRING FORTH ALL THE TITHE (v. 29)—See also 26:12-15. "In this instance, as in the other [See above], it would be impossible to eat all the tithe in one feast; and if it were thus eaten, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow would alternate between enormous feasts and excruciating fasts. The meaning evidently is that out of the supply laid up and kept on hand the Levites were to be provided for, and the poor to be kept from suffering. But here, again, the law in Numbers [Num. 18:21-32, Cf. Lev. 27:30-33] is presupposed. It had already provided for the support of the Levites out of the tithe, and this law simply adds the provision that the poor of the cities in which the tithe was stored should also be fed from it . . . It is like the provisions of a man's will in which by an early clause he bequeaths certain property to one of his children, and in a later clause directs that this child shall give an annual feast to his brothers and sisters, and keep from suffering any of them who might become very poor." (McGarvey)

Surely Israel was to be a *giving* nation. Vows, free-will offerings, burnt-offerings, drink-offerings, meal-offerings seem to come in an over-whelming deluge as one reads through the last four books of the Pentateuch. Then there were the festivals (Chap. 16) where the command was, "they shall not appear before Jehovah empty." Add to this such laws as the releasing from debt in the seventh year (15:1 ff.), helping and lending to the needy, and allowing for the poor in harvest time (24:19-22), and what characteristic would you have in a faithful Israelite? *Generosity*, both toward God and man!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*The Israelies are not to adopt superstitious customs in mourning, 1, 2. The different kinds of clean and unclean animals, 3-20. Nothing to be eaten that dieth of itself, 21. Concerning offerings which, from distance cannot be carried to the altar of God, and which may be turned into money, 22-26. The Levite is not to be forsaken, 27. The third year's tithe for the Levite, stranger, widow, &c., 28, 29.*

## (2) THE YEAR OF RELEASE (15:1-6)

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother; because Jehovah's release hath been proclaimed. 3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it: but whatsoever of thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release. 4 Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee; (for Jehovah will surely bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it;) 5 if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day. 6 For Jehovah thy God will bless thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:1-6

263. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of releasing all creditors every seven years.
264. Is there a distinction in legal and moral obligations? Discuss.
265. Are we promised freedom from poverty if we are obedient to Jehovah?
266. How account for the treatment of "foreigners" and "other nations" as in verses 3 and 6?
267. Are there present-day laws like those of Deuteronomy 15:1-6?  
At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:1-6

2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother; for the Lord's release is proclaimed.

3 Of a foreigner you may exact it; but whatever of yours is with your brother [Israelite] your hand shall release.

4 But there will be no poor among you, for the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess,

5 If only you carefully listen to the voice of the Lord your God, to do watchfully all these commandments which I command you this day.

6 When the Lord your God blesses you as He promised you, then you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

## COMMENT 15:1-6

It is interesting that a number of our states have very similar laws as this one. A man cannot be held indefinitely for a debt, and in most states if the overdue money is not collected by the creditor within a specified number of years, the borrower is no longer *legally* held responsible for the debt.

The year of release apparently corresponds with the "sabbatical year" in which the land was to rest and lie fallow (Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:1-7, 18-22.) In that year there was to be a general remission of debts. It was a wholesale "year of recovery" in every quarter. As every seventh day was to be a sabbath day, every seventh year was to be a sabbath year.

Did this *permanently* release the debtor of his responsibility? On this, the critics are divided. "This does not imply that the debt was to be remitted, but only that the debtor was not then to be pressed for payment . . . A law that every seventh year debts should be remitted, would have frustrated itself, for on such conditions no one would lend, and so there would be no debtors" (Pulpit). Similarly, A. Gosman states, "The clear reference to the land-rest or release, which was for the year, and the force of the Hebrew word [*nagas*] rendered *exact*, more correctly *urge* or *press*, and the whole spirit of the Mosaic law, which was not to destroy obligations of this kind, but guard the poor and unfortunate against undue severity or oppression, are all in favor of the interpretation which regards the release as for the year."

Whether the release was permanent or temporary, the godly Israelite should not have been hesitant to loan no matter what year it was. It might have been a temptation to withhold a loan from the needy in the 5th or 6th year when there was little hope of having it repaid, but was it therefore *right* for one to refuse help to his brother? Jesus' teaching goes far beyond this, instructing us to give to those in need out of love—repaid or not, Matt. 5:42, Lk. 6:34, 35. Of course, this does not cancel any Christian's *moral* and *spiritual* obligation to repay anything he borrows. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth" (Ps. 37:21). Surely a Christian's sense of *responsibility* in this area goes beyond mere civil code.

On the question as to whether this release is permanent or not, see further remarks with vv. 7-11, below.

THERE SHALL BE NO POOR WITH THEE (v. 4)—That is comparatively. If they were obedient, and followed God's directions and commandments. And if the very directions given *here* and elsewhere concerning *helping* the poor were followed, no one would go cold or hungry.

FOR JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL BLESS THEE (v. 6)—The blessings of this verse, as elsewhere in Deuteronomy, were promised and assured an *obedient* Israel.

### (3) THE POOR (15:7-11)

7 If there be with thee a poor man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother. 8 but thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need *in that* which he wanteth. 9 Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nought; and he cry unto Jehovah against thee, and it be sin unto thee. 10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. 11 For the poor will never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:7-11

268. How can we reconcile the thought of verse 4 with that of verse 7? Cf. verse 11.
269. Are we not to inquire as to the worthiness of the "poor brother"? Suppose he can not pay back the debt?
270. With what attitude should we give to the poor? Why is the attitude so important?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:7-11

7 If there is among you a poor man, one of your kinsmen in any of the towns of your land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not harden your [mind and] heart, or close your hand to your poor brother;

8 But you shall open your hand wide to him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, which he lacks.

9 Beware lest there be a base thought in your [mind and] heart, and you say, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and it be sin in you.

10 You shall give to him freely without begrudging it; because for this the Lord will bless you in all your work and in all you undertake.

11 For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor in your land.

### COMMENT 15:7-11

These verses (in spite of the comments above) cannot help but cause us to favor the interpretation of vv. 1-3 as indicating a total relinquishing of all debts at the end of the seventh year—at least such debts as contracted by a poor man, especially if the year of release was only a year or two off. But it appears these verses were designed to guard against just such a "base thought" (v. 9). A magnanimous spirit and feelings of compassion, mercy, and generosity would take precedence over selfish or personal motives.

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,  
When it is in the power of thy hand to do it.  
Say not unto thy neighbor  
Go, and come again, And tomorrow I will give;  
When thou hast it by thee.

—Prov. 3:27, 28

See also Prov. 11:24-26.

FOR THIS THING JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL BLESS THEE (v. 10)—God loves a cheerful giver, and will invariably grant blessings to him. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and the man that waters shall be watered himself. See Lk. 6:38, Acts 20:35.

THE POOR WILL NEVER CEASE OUT OF THE LAND (v. 11)—A principle Jesus cited (Mk. 14:7, Matt. 26:11, Jn. 12:8) as shown that *he* must be honored, worshipped, and glorified *while time allows*, for the poor are ever-present. Jesus did *not* teach that the poor were to be neglected. See Matt. 19:21, 25:31-46. But he would not have us *side-tracked from his worship* for humanitarian reasons. Christ will not take second place—even to the poor!

## (4) SLAVERY (15:12-18)

12 If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty: 14 thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press; as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing today. 16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go out from thee; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee; 17 then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years; and Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all that thou doest.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:12-18

271. Does this text sanction some form of slavery? Cf. Exodus 21:2-6; Leviticus 25:39-46.
272. Why be careful to provide the livelihood of the former slave? Cf. verse 18.
273. Wasn't it unreasonable to expect anyone to become a lifetime slave? Discuss.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:12-18

12 And if your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold to you and serve you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.

13 And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;

14 You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress; of what the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him.

15 And you shall [earnestly] remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I give you this command today.

16 But if the servant says to you, I will not go away from you, because he loves you and your household, since he does well with you.

17 Then take an awl and pierce his ear through to the door, and he shall be your servant always. And also to your bondwoman you shall do likewise.

18 It shall not seem hard to you when you let him go free from you; for at half the cost of a hired servant he has served you six years, and the Lord your God will bless you in all you do.

## COMMENT 15:12-18

Is this the same seventh year as referred to above—the "sabbath year"? Probably not. It seems to refer to *any* six years during which the individual has been in bondage. As vv. 13, 14 specify, this servant was not to be "left to the elements," but the spirit of love was to prompt a generous furnishing of his needs, so he could set up house for himself. If, however, he desired to stay, he could, and would be "branded" as specified in vv. 16, 17. Compare Ex. 21:2-6; also Lev. 25:39-46.

IT SHALL NOT SEEM HARD FOR THEE (v. 18)—An appreciative and grateful spirit, as well as a generous one, should have kept the master from disobeying this law (Cf. v. 9).

FOR TO THE DOUBLE OF THE HIRE OF A HIRELING HATH HE SERVED THEE (v. 18)—"At half the cost of a hired servant" (R.S.V., Amplified). ". . . for at half the cost of a hired workman he has served you six years" (Berkeley, and similarly rendered by several others). The master had used this man's services at a "bargain price"—now let him show his appreciation and gratitude toward him.

## (5) THE OFFERING OF THE FIRSTLINGS (15:19-23)

19 All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto Jehovah thy God: thou shalt do not work with the firstling of thy herd, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. 20 Thou shalt eat it before Jehovah thy God year by year in the place which Jehovah shall choose, thou and thy household. 21 And if it have any blemish, *as if it be* lame or blind, any ill blemish whatsoever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto Jehovah thy God. 22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean *shall eat it* alike, as the gazelle, and as the hart. 23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it out upon the ground as water.



# THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:19-23

274. What significance was there in setting aside the first-born as belonging to Jehovah?
275. Some first-born were not to be sacrificed unto the Lord—why? What was to be done with them?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:19-23

19 All the firstling males that are born of your herd and flock you shall set apart for the Lord your God; you shall do no work with the firstling of your herd, nor shear the firstling of your flock.

20 You shall eat it before the Lord your God annually in the place [for worship] which the Lord shall choose, you and your household.

21 But if it has any blemish, if it is lame, blind, or has any bad blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.

22 You shall eat it within your towns; the [ceremonially] unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a hart.

23 Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

## COMMENT 15:19-23

Note also 12:6, 14:23. The firstlings were God's (Ex. 13:2) and were to be brought to the central sanctuary just as the tithes and offerings. These were to be without blemish, v. 21 (Compare Lev. 22:17-25). The giver could share in partaking of the sacrificial feast (v. 20), just as we learned in chapters 12 and 14.

"It is enjoined that, as all the firstborn were to be sanctified to the Lord (Exod. xiii. 2-13), they were not to work with the firstborn of their cattle, either by yoking the bullock to the plough or wagon or by shearing the sheep; these belonged to God, and were not to be put to any vulgar uses of men; year by year they were to be brought to the sanctuary, offered as sacrifices and eaten before the Lord" (Pulpit).

These animals were "sanctified" (v. 19). The word *qadesh* means to be *pure, clean, holy, sacred*, from a more literal meaning of to *separate, set apart*. The firstling males were to be so separated for God (Ex. 13:12), though an ass could be redeemed with a lamb (Ex. 13:13, 34:19, 20). An unclean beast could also be redeemed, Lev. 27:26, 27.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*The Sabbatical year of release, 1. The manner in which this release shall take place, 2-5. Of lending to the poor, and the disposition in which it should be done, 6-11. Of the Hebrew servant who has served six years, and who shall be dismissed well furnished, 12-15. The ceremony of boring the ear, when the servant wishes to continue with his master, 16-18. Of the firstlings of the flock and herd, 19, 20. Nothing shall be offered that has any blemish, 21. The sacrifice to be eaten both by the clean and unclean, except the blood, which is never to be eaten, but poured out upon the ground, 22, 23.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWELVE (14:22—15:23)

1. How many *tithe*s did the faithful Israelite give to the Lord?
2. How did the three-year tithe differ from the "tithe of all the increase of thy seed . . . " ?
3. What if the central sanctuary was a long way from home? What provision was made?
4. What *principles* should a faithful Israelite have learned from these various laws about giving?
5. How often was the year of release from debt?
6. In relation to loaning, what "base thought" might the prosperous man have, and when would he be most likely to have it?
7. Who or what "will never cease out of the land"? How did Jesus apply this principle?
8. What does the expression, "for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee" (v. 18) mean?
9. For what could an Israelite use the firstlings of the flock?



Conies

Deut. 14, 7



Eagle

Deut. 14, 12

## LESSON THIRTEEN 16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1

### d. HOLY FESTIVALS (16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1)

(These three yearly feasts are also discussed in Ex. 23:14-17, 34:23; Lev. 23; Num. 28:16—29:40.)

#### (1) THE PASSOVER (16:1-8)\*

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto Jehovah thy God; for in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2 And thou shalt sacrifice the passover unto Jehovah thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which Jehovah shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. 4 And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; 6 but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. 7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God; thou shalt do no work *therein*.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:1-8

276. According to our calendar when was the month Abib?
277. In the order of observance, when were the days of unleavened bread?
278. Are we to understand from verse 5 that the Passover could not be observed in the home? Discuss.
279. Mention at least two comparisons of the sacrifice of our Passover lamb.

\*An excellent study of typology relating to the passover is found in the book *Shadow and Substance*, by Victor E. Hoven. (N. W. Christian College Press, Eugene, Ore.) He also treats the other festivals mentioned here. This book is for sale from *College Press*—Joplin, Missouri.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:1-8

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover to the Lord your God; for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

2 You shall offer the passover sacrifice to the Lord your God from the flock or the herd, in the place where the Lord will choose to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you fled from the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may [earnestly] remember the day when you came out of Egypt.

4 No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrificed the first day at evening be left all night until the morning.

5 You may not offer the passover sacrifices within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you;

6 But at the place which the Lord your God will choose in which to make His name [and His presence] dwell, there you shall offer the passover sacrifice in the evening at sunset, at the season that you came out of Egypt.

7 And you shall roast or boil and eat it in the place which the Lord your God will choose; and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.

8 Six days you shall eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work on it.

## COMMENT 16:1-8

Basic to a study of this feast is a knowledge of the original Passover, Ex. 12 and 13.

OBSERVE THE MONTH ABIB (v. 1)—The first Jewish month, Ex. 12:2. Lev. 23:5 specifies that the passover was to begin on the 14th day of this month, at even. The Jewish month Abib overlaps between our March and April. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, states, "From the time of the institution of the Mosaic law downward the month was a lunar one. The cycle of the religious feasts commencing with the passover depended not simply on the month, but the moon; the 14th of Abib was coincident with the full moon . . . the commencement of the month was generally decided by observation of the new moon."

The months were often simply referred to by number, and some had more than one name. Abib, for example, is also called Nisan (Neh. 2:1).

AND THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER (v. 2)—The feast's name and its implications are obvious from Ex. 12:21-28. Our Paschal Lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed and we, too, have been redeemed from bondage and slavery. ". . . wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7, 8). Even as God *passed over* the houses of those Israelites who had appropriated to themselves the blood of the lamb, so God will *pass over* us, not inflicting the penalty of death, if we have appropriated unto ourselves "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

OF THE FLOCK AND OF THE HERD (v. 2)—Note the offerings demanded on this day in Num. 28:18 ff.

THOU SHALT EAT NO UNLEAVENED BREAD (v. 3)—Ex. 12:39 gives the reason for this. They were not only to have unleavened bread, but no leaven was to be found in their houses (see v. 4 and Ex. 12:19). Leaven is usually also a type of sin, I Cor. 5:6, 7; Gal. 5:7-9.

BREAD OF AFFLICTION (v. 3)—So called because of the affliction from which they were delivered in Egypt.

AT EVEN, AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN (v. 6)—Referring to Exodus 12, Victor E. Hoven says of the passover lamb: "It was killed at even on the fourteenth, about three o'clock (vs. 6) the time Israel came out of Egypt (Deut. 16:6). At the same time, when the daily evening sacrifice of a lamb took place in Jerusalem, the Lamb of God expired on the cross (Matt. 27:45-50)."—Shadow and Substance, p. 95.

## (2) PENTECOST (16:9-12)

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing grain shalt thou begin to number seven weeks. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God blesseth thee: 11 and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son,

and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:9-12

280. Please read Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31 and Deuteronomy 26:1-11 to be able to understand this feast, and more especially the counting of time.
281. Why call this the feast of Pentecost?
282. Why was the purpose of this feast?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:9-12

9 You shall count seven weeks: beginning to number the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.

10 Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give to the Lord your God, as the Lord your God blesses you.

11 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns, the stranger or temporary resident, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place in which the Lord your God chooses to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

12 And you shall (earnestly) remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be watchful and obey these statutes.

### COMMENT 16:9-12

(More on this feast in Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31, and Deut. 26:1-11.)

This feast has several names: also called Harvest and First-fruits. It marked the *beginning* of the harvest period, and is called Pentecost (fiftieth) because they were to number fifty days after the Passover for its observance (Lev. 23:15, 16; Acts 2:1) which was on the first day of the week. Because seven weeks of seven days were numbered before it was observed during their month Sisan or Sivan, which answers to our May-June.

The giving of the first fruits, of course, honored God. In the old economy God was to be thought of *first*—how much more in the new!

## (3) TABERNACLES (16:13-15)

13 Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress: 14 and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15 Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:13-15

283. What was the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles?  
 284. Read: Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:33-36; Numbers 29:12-16 to help in your understanding of this feast.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:13-15

13 You shall observe the feast of tabernacles or booths seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and wine vat.

14 You shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, the Levite, the transient and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, that are within your towns.

15 Seven days you shall keep a solemn feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses; because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce, and in all the works of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

## COMMENT 16:13-15

Also called the feasts of booths, and ingathering. See Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-36, 39-44; Num. 29:12-16. It was on the 15th day of the 7th month, the month Tisri (our Sept.-Oct.). At this time they "gathered in the fruits of the land" (Lev. 23:39). The word "*Tabernacles*" (from the Heb. *sukkah* or succoth)\* is translated "booths" in most of the recent versions as this word more aptly describes the "homes" of the Israelites during the week this festival was being celebrated. It was "camp meetin' time," and a memorial service to

\*Gesenius says of this word: "a booth, a cot, made of leaves and branches interwoven . . ." He would render the phrase, "the feast of tabernacles (v. 13) "the feast of booths and branches."

their camping days as they came out of Egypt, as well as a "Thanksgiving Day" for the recent harvest.

AND THOU SHALT BE ALTOGETHER JOYFUL (v. 15)—This probably was Israel's most festive and joyous feast.

#### 4. GENERAL RULES FOR OBSERVANCE

(16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1)

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Jehovah empty: 17 every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar; which Jehovah thy God hateth.

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God an ox, or a sheep, wherein is a blemish, *or* any thing evil; for that is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

285. To what "place" does verse 16 allude?
286. What was to be given by every man? In what attitude?
287. What a strange prohibition! Who would consider such a strange admixture of Jehovah and Asherah? Cf. verse 21.
288. If a man did not have a healthy animal to offer to the Lord what should he do?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

16 Three times a year shall all your males appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, in the feast of unleavened bread, in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles or booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed;

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

21 You shall not plant you any kind of tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the Lord your God which you shall make.



22 Neither shall you set up an idolatrous stone or image, which the Lord your God hates.

You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or sheep with a blemish or any defect whatever; for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE (v. 17)—This was true of the giving required at these feasts (whether the offerings specified were for the particular feast, or free-will offerings) and all through the ages. Paul asked each Corinthian Christian to "lay by him in store, as he may prosper" (I Cor. 16:2). "For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not" (See II Cor. 8:3, 12).

THOU SHALT NOT PLANT THERE AN ASHERAH OF ANY KIND OF TREE BESIDE THE ALTAR (v. 21)—See 7:2, 5, notes; 12:1-4. An "Asherah of any kind of tree" (or, as otherwise rendered, "an asherah [or pole] of any wood") has reference to the idols of wood that were made to this female diety. The commentators are not altogether agreed as to whether the name Asherah "is the name of a distinct goddess, as well as the 'poles,' 'stumps,' or 'stems' which represented her; or whether the notorious 'Ashtoreth' (Astarte) was herself worshipped under these obscene images."\* In any case the rites associated with the "Asherahs" were immoral—involving the glorification—even deification—of sexual passion.

Note here that God did not want *his* worship associated in *any way* with idolatry and such sensual and evil "rites" as accompanied it. Yet there was apparently the possibility that there would be an attempt to *blend* the true religion of God with the Asherah. So the later statements that Israel "feared Jehovah and served other gods."

THOU SHALT NOT SACRIFICE . . . OX . . . SHEEP, WHEREIN IS A BLEMISH (17:1)—See also 15:21, Lev. 22:19-25. It seems probable that this exhortation was given in connection with the sacrifices to be offered at the three major festivals just mentioned.

Such animals could be eaten, but not sacrificed to *God*. There is surely a parallel here between what God demanded in an Old Testament

\*Rotherham, in a Special Note on the *Destruction of the Canaanite Nations*. It is difficult to find cultured words to express the grossness of the immorality associated with these idols.

sacrifice, and the life he expects us, *through Christ*, to give to him as a Christian. We are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (See Rom. 12:1, 2). And how thankful we can be that the perfect sacrifice of Christ compensates for our imperfection!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*The month of Abib to be observed, 1. The feast of the passover and of unleavened bread, 2-8. The feast of weeks, 9-12. The feast of tabernacles, 13-15. All the males to appear before the Lord thrice in the year, none to come empty, each to give according to his ability, 16, 17. Judges and officers to be made in all their cities, 18. Strict justice shall be executed, 19, 20. No grove to be planted near the altar of God, nor any image to be set up, 21, 22.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON THIRTEEN

(16:1-17, 21, 22; 17:1)

1. Name the three yearly Jewish feasts, giving at least two names for each, and the time of year each was observed.
2. What did the Passover commemorate? (Discuss the name and its significance.)
3. Why use unleavened bread? Why was it called "bread of affliction"?
4. Explain what Paul meant when he referred to Christ as our passover.
5. How did "Pentecost" get its name?
6. What was celebrated at this feast?
7. What great New Testament event occurred on the first day of this feast?
8. Why is the *feast of tabernacles* so called?
9. What *two* things did this festival commemorate?
10. Were both men and women to attend these annual festivals?
11. Who or what were the Asherah?
12. In this lesson, what kind of sacrifice is an abomination unto Jehovah?

## LESSON FOURTEEN 16:18-20; 17:2—18:22

### e. THE LEADERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE (16:18-20; 17:2—18:22) (Laws concerning Judges, kings, priests, and prophets)

#### (1) JUDGES (16:18-20; 17:2-13)

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, according to thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

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2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, then shalt thou inquire diligently; and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, 5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who hath done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them to death with stones. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shalt he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; 9 and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days: and thou shalt inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. 10 And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee: 11 according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall

tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. 12 And the man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:18-20; 17:2-13

289. Think carefully about the full meaning of the term "judge" as used here; to what office or work does this term compare in our day? A lawyer?
290. How could justice be "wrested"?
291. Approximate a circumstance in which a bribe could be attractive.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:18-20; 17:2-13

18 You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

19 You shall not misinterpret or misapply judgment; you shall not be partial, or take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous.

20 Follow what is altogether just [that is, uncompromisingly righteous], that you may live and inherit the land which your God gives you.

2 If there is found among you, within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you, a man or woman who does what is wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, by transgressing His covenant,

3 Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or moon or any of the host of the heavens, which I have forbidden,

4 And it is told and you hear of it; then inquire diligently, and if it is certainly true that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

5 Then you shall bring forth to your town's gates that man or woman who has done that wicked thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death.

6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses, he who is worthy of death shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between one kind of bloodshed and another, between one legality and another, between one kind of assault and another, matters of controversy within your towns, then arise and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses,

9 And you shall come to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall make clear to you the decision.

10 And you shall do according to the decision which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses, and you shall be watchful to do according to all that they tell you;

11 According to the decision of the law which they shall teach you, and the judgment which they shall announce to you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the verdict they give you, either to the right hand or the left.

12 The man who does presumptuously, and will not listen to the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or to the judge, that man shall die; so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and not act presumptuously again.

### COMMENT 16:18-20; 17:2-13

We have treated the last of these two sections in lesson ten because the basic subject matter is the same. But because the scripture also concerns the judges, we include it again here.

JUDGES AND OFFICERS SHALT THOU MAKE IN ALL THY GATES (v. 18)—Obviously anticipating the settled life in Canaan. In ancient times, the gates of the city composed the "city hall," and the chief area of civil business. In Ch. 1:13-18 we saw how judges were appointed for Israel's good for the length of their wilderness wanderings. Now, a similar system was in order for each city. "JUDGES . . . *shophetim*, among the Hebrews, were probably the same as our *magistrates* or *justices of the peace*. OFFICERS . . . *shoterim*, seems to have been the same as our inquest sergeants, beadles [formerly, messengers of the court] & c., whose office it was to go into the houses, shops, & c., and examine *weights, measures*, and the civil conduct of the people. When they found anything amiss, they brought the person offending

before the *magistrate*, and he was punished by the *officer* on the spot. They seem also to have acted as heralds in the army, chap. xx. 5." (Clarke, who is, of course, comparing Britain).

The Hebrew word for judge (*shaphat*) is the same as occurs in the book of Judges, but, as we saw in Lesson Ten (17:9), the same word is used for men who usually performed very different functions than those outlined here.\*

THOU SHALT NOT WREST JUSTICE (v. 19)—See 1:16, 17, notes.

IF THERE BE FOUND IN THE MIDST OF THEE (v. 2)—On vv. 2-13, see our remarks in lesson ten. Note that the judge is involved in judgment of the difficult cases (v. 9) working in conjunction with the priests. Cf. 19:15-21.

## (2) KINGS (17:14-20)

14 When thou art come unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me; 15 thou shalt surely set him king over thee, whom Jehovah thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother. 16 Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; forasmuch as Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: 19 and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them; 20 that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.

\*Some judges during that era *did* appear to perform in an office similar to Moses' in the wilderness, judging the "hard matters"—Judges 3:10, 4:5, I Sam. 4:18, 7:6, 15. But when it is said of a man, "he judged Israel twenty years" (Samson. Judges 16:31), much more is meant.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:14-20

292. These verses contain a prophesy covering how many years?  
293. Was this prediction an encouragement to disobedience? Discuss.  
294. Discuss the importance of the three prohibitions. Cf. verses 16, 17.  
295. What law book was to be copied by the King? For what purpose?  
296. What are some of the indications of "his heart" being "lifted up above his brethren"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 17:14-20

14 When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live there, and then say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me;

15 You shall surely set as king over you him whom the Lord your God will choose; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner, who is not your brother, over you.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses, since the Lord said to you, You shall never return that way.

17 And he shall not multiply wives to himself, that his [mind and] heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And when he sits on his royal throne, he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of what is before the Levitical priests;

19 And he shall keep it with him, and he shall read it in all the days of his life, that he may learn (reverently) to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them;

20 That his [mind and] heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he may not turn aside from the commandments, to the right hand or to the left; so that he may continue long, he and his sons, in his kingdom in Israel.

## COMMENT 17:14-20

As we have already seen, and *shall* see in this book, God divinely anticipates the evil into which Israel would degenerate and makes provision for it. See another example of this in I Sam. 8:4-22, 12:12. He does not condone or endorse all he allows—or all he foreknows. Their desire for a king would represent a degeneration and corruption of Israel's Theocracy. But God was still their father, and Israel was still

his nation, and he was not about to forsake them on this account. So the regulatory laws we have here. As we will see, even *these* were soon broken!

Because God knew ahead of time what Israel would do after they arrived in the promised land, did not mean he *caused* or *compelled* them to do it—much less authorized it. A scientist-astronomer may now know that an eclipse will take place exactly at such-and-such a time in 1980. Does his foreknowledge *cause* the eclipse? No, but it may cause *him* to do many things in *anticipation* of it. It seems we have a fair parallel here. God anticipated the evil into which Israel would degenerate in clamoring for a king, and the present scriptures provide *for that state of things*. McGarvey asks, "What was to prevent Moses from anticipating this? He was starting his people on their national career without a king, when all the nations round about them had kings, and had been ruled by them in the past. He would have been grossly ignorant of human nature had he not anticipated and feared that in the course of time they would grow weary of such singularity, and want to live like other nations. Such has been the fearful anticipation of every body of patriots who ever organized a democratic or republican form of government."\*

AND SHALT SAY, I WILL SET A KING OVER ME (v. 14)—I Sam. 8:5, 19, 20.

KING . . . WHOM JEHOVAH THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE (v. 15)—An Israelite that had God's divine approval. Note, for example, David's anointing, I Sam. 16:4-13. Of course, this principle was often broken after the kingdom divided.

HE SHALL NOT MULTIPLY HORSES (v. 16) . . . WIVES (v. 17) . . . SILVER AND GOLD (v. 17)—King solomon probably represents the most flagrant transgressor of these prohibitions. He at first obeyed the Lord, and riches (which he had not asked for )were added to his request for wisdom (I K. 3:9-14). But he was soon sidetracked from whole-hearted service to Jehovah. Exactly as these verses specify he was *not* to do, he multiplied

- (1) Horses—I K. 4:26 (Cf. II Chron. 9:25) 10:26, 28, 29. Note also that his horses "were brought out of Egypt"—again breaking the command of God as we have it here (v. 16).

A king would not "multiply" horses normally, unless prepar-

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, p. 116



ing for war or building up military might. See Ps. 20:7, 33:16-19, 147:10, 11; Prov. 21:31; Isa. 2:5-8. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!" (Isa. 31:1).

- (2) Riches—I K. 10:27, II Chron. 1:15. At first given by God, money apparently became an obsession with him. This meant heavy, excessive taxes, plus a system of forced labor, I K. 5:13-17. Compare Israel's complaint to Rehoboam, I K. 12:4.
- (3) Wives—I K. 11:1-10. These turned Solomon's heart away from God.

HE SHALL WRITE HIM A COPY OF THIS LAW OUT OF THAT WHICH IS BEFORE THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES (v. 18)—"It is likely this means, that the copy which the king was to write out was to be taken from the autograph kept in the tabernacle before the Lord, from which, as a standard, every copy was taken, and with which doubtless every copy was compared; and it is probable that the priests and Levites had the revising of every copy that was taken off, in order to prevent errors from creeping into the sacred text." (Clarke) The priests were the custodians of the law (31:26).

The book was to be constantly studied and meditated upon by the king (vv. 19, 20)—and be his directory and guide in daily life. Joshua was not a king, but was God's leader of Israel, note Josh. 1:7, 8. David, of course, is the king who truly held God's law in its proper esteem (Ps. 119, etc.).

It is probable, however, that the "book" here referred to was neither the book of Deuteronomy or the Pentateuch. "As this law was to be copied 'out of that which was before the priests,' it did not, of course, contain all that was in that book; and as it was to govern the king rather than the priests or the people, it included only such portions as related to the king's personal and official duties. It was not, therefore, a very long document." (McGarvey)

This may have been "the testimony" given Jehoash (Joash), II K. 11:12.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*All sacrifices to be without blemish, 1. Of persons convicted of idolatry and their punishment, 2-7. Difficult matters in judgment to be laid before the priests and judges, and to be determined by them;*

*and all to submit to their decision, 8-13. The king that may be chosen to be one of their brethren; no stranger to be appointed to that office, 14, 15. He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return unto Egypt, 16. Nor multiply wives, money, &c., 17. He shall write a copy of the law for his own use, and read and study it all his days, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, 18-20.*

## (3) PRIESTS (18:1-8)

The priests the Levites, *even* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and his inheritance. 2 And they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: Jehovah is their inheritance, as he hath spoken unto them. 3 And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, that they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. 4 The first-fruits of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. 5 For Jehovah thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah, him and his sons for ever.

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourneth, and come with all the desire of his soul unto the place which Jehovah shall choose; 7 then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, who stand there before Jehovah. 8 They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:1-8

297. What distinction was there between a priest and a Levite?
298. What three portions of the sacrificial animal belonged to the Levite?
299. The attitude of the worshipper toward God is reflected in what he gave to the man of God; how so?
300. There is a special type of Levite described in verses 6 through 8; who is he?
301. What is "patrimony"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 18:1-8

The Levitical priests and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings made by fire to the Lord, and His rightful dues.

2 They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He promised them.

3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.

4 The first fruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first or best of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give the priest.

5 For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand to minister in the name [and presence] of the Lord, him and his sons for ever.

6 And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he is a temporary resident, he may come whenever he desires to [the sanctuary] the place the Lord will choose,

7 Then he may minister in the name [and presence] of the Lord his God, like all his brethren the Levites, who stand to minister there before the Lord.

8 They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what may come of the sale of his patrimony. [Jer. 32:6-15.]

### COMMENT 18:1-8

We have already studied considerably concerning the priests and their divine allotment from the tithes and offerings of Israel (10:8, 9, 12:12, 17-19, 14:27-29). Having no inheritance, they were dependent upon the goodness and faithfulness of Israel for their support and livelihood.

THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES, EVEN ALL THE TRIBE OF LEVI (v. 1)—On the term "Levites," Smith's Bible Dictionary states, "Sometimes the name extends to the whole tribe, the priests included, Ex. 6:25; Lev. 25:32; Num. 35:2; Dt. 18:1; Josh. 21:3, 41, etc; sometimes only to those members of the tribe who were not priests, and as distinguished from them. Sometimes again it is added as an epithet of the smaller portion of the tribe, and we read of "the priests the Levites" Josh. 3:3; Ezek. 44:15."

One family of Levites, Aaron and his sons, was set apart to be priests as such. The rest of the Levites were assistants to the priests, caring for the transportation and upkeep of the tabernacle, and later, the service of the temple. But they were all a part of the *priestly tribe*.

AND HIS INHERITANCE (v. 1) i.e., God's. ". . . and His rightful dues" [Amplified].

AND THIS SHALL BE THE PRIESTS' DUE (v. 3)—Of that part of the sacrifice that he was to keep for himself.

THE MAW (v. 3)—better, *the stomach*. The "rough stomach of ruminants, in which the digestion was completed" (Pulpit).

As much as it might seem otherwise to us, these were regarded as the choice parts of the animal. They were given in addition to the wave breast and heave leg of the peace offerings (Lev. 7:32 ff., Num. 18:11, which belonged with the "offerings made by fire" (v. 1). God's ministers of Israel were to eat well!

THE FIRST-FRUIT . . . SHALT THOU GIVE HIM (v. 4)—See Num. 18:12, 13. Moses here adds that the first fleece of the sheep shall be the priests'.

We can see from these verses, (and by comparing our discussion in ch. 12) that the Israelite had not only to think about the *amount* he gave, but also the *quality*. God's servants should not have the worst part of the animal, but the *best*; and of the tithe from the field and flock, they were to get their share *first*. And why? Because God had chosen them to minister in his name (v. 5)! Is anything more important than that?

How often this simple principle could well be learned today, among God's people. Those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (I Cor. 9:14)—*live*, not *exist*. If we have attached the proper *importance* and *dignity* to the work of Christ, his *servants* will have our generous and hearty assistance. Aaron and Hur, *God's servants*, needed some one else to hold up their hands to be effective with God.

AND IF A LEVITE COME FROM ANY OF THY GATES (note vv. 6-8)—Only a portion of the Levites were engaged in the service of the sanctuary; the rest lived in their towns throughout the country, Num. 35:7. It might happen, however, that a Levite, moved by holy feeling, would come to the place of the sanctuary to worship there; and it is prescribed that such a one should fare as his brethren the Levites engaged in the service of the sanctuary fared; he should minister along with them, and share with them in the gifts of the worshippers; and this in addition to any means he might have from the sale of his patrimony.

THE SALE OF HIS PATRIMONY (v. 7).—The latter word literally signifies "the fathers" and which Young renders "upon (concerning) the fathers (clans)." The I.S.B.E. states, "e.g. 'house of the fathers.'" It may indicate some private source of income possessed by the Levite [who has come up from a country district] distinct from what he receives as a priest officiating at the central sanctuary." Beyond this one occurrence of "patrimony," we have the same idea conveyed elsewhere: "Father, give me the portion of thy [Greek, *the*] substance that falleth unto me. And he divided unto them his living" (Lk. 15:12). "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me" (Lk. 12:13).

The Levite, as we have already learned (12:12, 19, 14:27) had no inheritance as such. He was therefore to be provided for out of the tithes and offerings of Israel. But when this sojourner came to the house of God and the place of sacrifice, he too, was to have his portion, along with the other priests. And this was to be so, even though he sold the house he had inherited (that is, that had been passed down to him) from his fathers. See Lev. 25:32-34. He might also have had such supplies, furniture, etc. as was voluntarily contributed to him by grateful Israelites. These might be passed down from generation to generation, and the "sale" here might include such. When a man leaves the home he has known from childhood to devote his life to the Lord's ministry, he is not to be deprived the income he might receive in the process of "selling out."

#### (4) PROPHETS (18:9-22)

9 When thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, 11 or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 12 For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah: and because of these abominations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee. 13 Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God. 14 For these nations, that thou shalt dispossess, hearken unto them that practise augury, and unto diviners; but as for thee, Jehovah thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

15 Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb

in the day of the assembly, saying Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

20 But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? 22 when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:9-22

302. What is meant by the expression "to pass through the fire"? Cf. 12:31.
303. Please define separately the following terms: (1) divination, (2) augury, (3) enchanter (4) sorcerer, (5) charmer, (6) consulter with familiar spirits, (7) wizard, (8) necromancer.
304. "Abomination" is a strong word. How is it used here.
305. Besides the immoral and idolatrous practices accompanying the use of these various "fortune tellers" there was a basic sin more fundamental than these external practices. What was it?
306. Verse 13 is a key verse. Read it carefully.
307. Give three qualities of "the prophet" God was to raise up.
308. Read Acts 3:19-23; 7:37 and re-read these verses to understand just how this prophecy is fulfilled.
309. A prophet could speak "presumptuously." If so, what would be involved?
310. Some prophets were to be put to death. What test was to be exercised?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 18:9-22

9 When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of these nations.

10 There shall not be found among you any one who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer,

11 Or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and it is because of these abominable practices that the Lord your God is driving them out from before you.

13 You shall be blameless (and absolutely true) to the Lord your God.

14 For these nations, whom you shall dispossess, listen to soothsayers and diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.

15 The Lord your God will raise up for you \*a prophet from the midst of your brethren, like me [Moses]; to him you shall listen.

16 This is what you desired (and asked) of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.

17 And the Lord said to me, They have well said all that they have spoken.

18 I will raise up for them a prophet from among their brethren, like you, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

19 And whoever will not hearken to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

21 And if you say in your [mind and] heart, How shall we know which words the Lord has not spoken?

\*The insertion of this promise in connection with the preceding prohibition, might warrant the application which some make of it, to that order of true prophets whom God commissioned in unbroken succession to instruct, to direct, and warn His people; and in this view the gist of it is, "there is no need to consult with diviners and soothsayers, for I shall afford you the benefit of divinely appointed prophets, for judging of whose identity a sure clue is given" (vs. 20,22). But the prophet here promised was pre-eminently the Messiah, for He alone was 'like unto Moses in His mediatorial character; in the peculiar excellence of His ministry; in the number, variety and magnitude of His miracles; in His close and familiar communion with God; and in His being the author of a new dispensation of religion.' This prediction was fulfilled 1500 years afterwards, and was expressly applied to Christ by Peter (Acts 3:22,23), and by Stephen (Acts 7:37)—*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*.

22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or prove true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

## COMMENT 18:9-22

We have included these three paragraphs together because the spokesman of *God*, his true mouthpiece, is contrasted to the diviner, wizard, and *false* prophet best by taking this entire section together.

Included here, of course, is one of the most wonderful prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament.

In vv. 9-13 sorcery and divination are forbidden.

PASS THROUGH THE FIRE (v. 10)—See 12:31 and notes.

DIVINATION . . . AUGURY . . . ENCHANTER, etc. (v. 10-14)—These terms would cover all types of the magical or secret arts. How could one claim total trust and faith in the leading *Jehovah*, and also claim guidance by *these means*? They were *destructive* of such trust. God would have us "come ye out from among them, and be ye separate." *God's* people do not need to consult the stars, "fortune tellers," gypsies, or other of the "black arts" for their guidance.

These people were not to be imitated by Israelites (Lev. 19:26), nor be consulted by them (Lev. 19:31), but both they and those who turned to them were to be put to death, (Lev. 20:6, 27, Ex. 22:18).

King Saul, who at first responded wonderfully to this commandment, later degenerated to a point of consulting a witch himself! See I Sam. 28:3 ff., I Chron. 10:13, 14. King Manasseh fell into a similar sin, II K. 21:6, II Chron. 33:6, but king Josiah put all who dealt with them out of the land, II K. 23:24.

FAMILIAR SPIRIT (v. 11)—Probably so called because it was regarded as the "friend" and "servant" of the person possessing it, and might be summoned to do services at his command.

NECROMANCER (v. 11)—One who inquires for, or consults with, the spirits of the dead.

Obviously, some of these names overlap. Keil and Delitsch will remark,

"Moses groups together all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of



soothsaying, and places the prohibition of Moloch-worship at the head [v. 10], to show the inward connection between soothsaying and idolatry, possibly because februation, or passing children through the fire in the worship of Moloch, was more intimately connected with soothsaying and magic than any other description of idolatry" (*Commentary on the Pentateuch*, III, 393).

**A PROPHET FROM THE MIDST OF THEE** (v. 15)—Here we have a blessed prophecy of Christ, the great prophet (*Nabi*, spokesman, mouthpiece, preacher) of God. He would not be a foreigner, but would arise "from the midst of thee," His office and work, Moses tells us, will be "like unto me," and unto him shall all hearken. Even as Moses was God's divinely appointed delivered and saviour of Israel, so it would be with this Prophet. ". . . and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

That this is a divine prophecy of our Lord is made clear by inspiration (Acts 3:19-23, 7:37). Thus John denies that *he* is "the prophet" (Jn. 1:19-25). See also Matt. 21:10, 11; Jn. 1:45, 6:14, 7:40. Compare Jn. 5:45-47.

As in 13:1-5, we *may* have here also the requirements for *God's true prophets*—i.e. the prophet of *God* as contrasted to the false, lying and deceitful prophets of Baal and other dieties. "No doubt the language of Moses had a *general* fulfillment in the raising up of a prophetic succession, culminating in the appearance and work of Jesus Christ, to Whom therefore it eminently refers" (Joseph Angus, *The Bible Handbook*). Because of his position as successor to Moses as God's chosen leader and spokesman, many have thought the *immediate* fulfillment of this prophecy was found in Joshua (Heb. savior). But so far as the Bible statements are concerned, Christ represents the fulfillment of this prophecy.

**AND I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH** (v. 18)—Jesus said, "For I spoke not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (Jn. 12:49, 50). See also Jn. 7:16-17.

**AND WHOSOEVER WILL NOT HEARKEN** (v. 19)—See Jn. 12:48, Acts 3:23, Heb. 12:24, 25. The words of our divine Prophet must be heeded. God said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;

HEAR YE HIM" (Matt. 17:5). Note the application the Holy Spirit makes in Heb. 10:28-31. O that we might stand in awe of Christ's words!

BUT THE PROPHET THAT SHALL SPEAK A WORD PRESUMPTUOUSLY IN MY NAME (v. 20)—See "presumptuously" defined under 1:43. Note that it is done in the name of God! Ff. Matt. 7:21-23. See 13:1-5 and notes. Also Matt. 24:24, Mk. 13:22. False prophets always speak *some* truth—else *no one* would believe them!

Whether he spoke in the name of *God*, or in the name of *gods*, if it was not that which God had commanded to be spoken, he was to die! Surely we can learn here how imperative it is that God's spokesmen teach *his words* (Jas. 3:1).

HOW SHALL WE KNOW . . . ? (v. 21)—By comparing Ch. 13:1-5 we arrive at three tests of this prophet. 1. Was his teaching in accord with the teachings of God? 2. Did he prophesy in the name of other gods? 3. Did his prophecies come to pass? It might take a while to check him out on the third qualification, but not the first and second. On any of these counts he was to be put to death.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*The priests and Levites to have no inheritance, 1, 2. What is the priest's due, 3-5. Of the Levites that come from any of the other cities, 6-8. The Israelites must not copy the abominations of the former inhabitants, 9. None to cause his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or use any kind of divination or enchantment, as the former inhabitants did, 10-14. The great prophet which God promised to raise up, 15-19. Of false prophets, 20; and how to discern them, 21, 22.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FOURTEEN

(16:18-20; 17:2—18:22)

1. Name at least two temptations faced by the judges.
2. Was a king for Israel within the will of God? Explain.
3. What two qualifications does God here lay down for the king-to-be?
4. Once he became king, a ruler was forbidden to multiply \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Why not multiply horses?

6. What great king was the most flagrant transgressor on all three counts?
7. What was the king to do with at least this portion of the word of God?
8. Do you remember the part of the animal the priest received? What is significant about this?
9. If a new priest began to serve in the sanctuary, would he have "eating privileges"?
10. What was the priest's "patrimony" (v. 8)? Does not this "contradict" previous statements that the priest had no inheritance?
11. What would happen to the Levites if the people were not generous and obedient to the commands to support them? . . . What would happen to the *quality* of the various services surrounding the sanctuary?
12. Couldn't a person use divination, sorcery, and consult wizards *as well as* worship God? Explain.
13. Who is the "prophet" of vv. 15-19. (*Prove* your answer with scripture!)
14. Without looking, can you remember three identifying characteristics of this prophet?
15. In what three ways could a "prophet" show that he was *not* God's prophet?



9 as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

## LESSON FIFTEEN 19:1-21; 21:1-9

### f. THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY (19:1-21; 21:1-9)

#### (1) CONCERNING MURDER (19:1-13; 21:1-9)

##### (a) The Cities of Refuge (19:1-13)

When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations, whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; 2 thou shalt set apart three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it. 3 Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders of thy land, which Jehovah thy God causeth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every manslayer may flee thither.

4 And this is the case of the manslayer, that shall flee thither and live: whoso killeth his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in time past; 5 as when a man goeth into the forest with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor, so that he dieth; he shall flee unto one of these cities and live: 6 lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and smite him mortally; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. 7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt set apart three cities for thee. 8 And if Jehovah thy God enlarge thy border, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; 9 if thou shalt keep all this commandment to do it, which I command thee this day, to love Jehovah thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, besides these three: 10 that innocent blood be not shed in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.

11 But if any man hate his neighbor, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally so that he dieth, and he flee into one of these cities; 12 then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13 Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:1-13

311. Note the strong element of specific faith in verses 1 and 2. What example is in this for us?

312. Suppose the avenger of blood was not of the temperament to take vengeance?
313. In the example given, why would there be a problem if the nearest of kin knew it was only an accident?
314. What three cities were involved in the description here? What three were added later?
315. First degree murder was always punished. Why?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:1-13

When the Lord your God has cut off the nations whose land the Lord your God gives you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses;

2 You shall set apart three cities for you in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess.

3 You shall prepare the road, and divide the territory of your land, which the Lord your God gives you to possess, into three parts, so that any manslayer can flee to them.

4 And this is the case of the slayer who shall flee there that he may live. Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, for whom he had no enmity in time past;

5 As when a man goes into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand strikes with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slips off the handle and lights on his neighbor, and kills him; he may flee to one of those cities and live;

6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his [mind and] heart are hot with anger, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; although the slayer was not worthy of death, since he had not been at enmity with him previously.

7 Therefore I command you, You shall set apart three [refuge] cities.

8 And if the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He has sworn to your fathers to do, and gives you all the land which He promised to your fathers to give,

9 If you keep all these commandments to do them, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to walk always in His ways; then you shall add three other cities to these three,

10 Lest innocent blood be shed in your land, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and so blood guilt be upon you.

11 But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and attacks him and wounds him mortally so that he dies, and the assailant flees into one of these cities,

12 Then the elders of his own city shall send and fetch him there, and give him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die.

13 Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall clear Israel of the guilt of innocent blood, that it may be well with you.

### COMMENT 19:1-13

See also Ch. 4:41-43 and notes. There we had the east-side cities set apart. Now provision is made, not only for the first three, but a second three, and also "three cities more" (v. 9) on the west side. The controversy as to whether the former passage is chronologically out of place, is not worth the energy of debate. We will leave it where it is, as a part of the divine record, and leave this where it is for the same reason. As will be seen below, there is no good reason for changing the order of the two passages.

WHEN JEHOVAH . . . SHALL CUT OFF THE NATIONS (v. 1)—This beginning phrase makes it seem obvious that the refuge cities Moses now refers to are the *west* side cities, not the east, for the conquering of the east side, as well as the setting aside of the refuge cities on that side of the Jordan, was *history*, and Israel was now camping near the banks of the Jordan, yea, not far from the water's edge! See 1:1, 3:27, etc. In view of the fact that the tribes of Ephraim, Gad and Manasseh (except those able to go forth to war, who were to assist Israel) were to stay on the *east* side, it would only be natural for Moses to go ahead and set apart the cities on that side (4:41-43).

THOU SHALT SET APART THREE CITIES (v. 2)—McGarvey remarks on the sequence of setting these cities aside thus:

"As the Pentateuch now stands, the first command on the subject is in the thirty-fifth chapter of Numbers. There the order to appoint cities of refuge is given, the number then is stated, and the law by which their use is to be regulated is elaborated. No one of the cities is named. Next, in Deut. iv. 41-43, it is said that Moses, after the conquest of the country east of the Jordan, selected three of them, and their names are given. Next, in Deut. xix. 1-13, Moses directs that after they shall have possessed the country west of the Jordan, they shall select three cities of refuge on that side; he repeats the law less elaborately, and orders that if Jehovah shall enlarge their borders, and

give them all the land promised to their fathers, they shall add three other cities on that side [v. 9], so that all the manslayers may have the benefit of a place of refuge. Their borders were never thus extended until the reign of David, and they remained so only till the close of Solomon's reign, and consequently these three additional cities were never appointed."

In Josh. 20:1-9 these three west-side cities are set apart: Kedesh in Naphtali, Shechem in Ephraim, and Hebron in Judah. The east-side cities are again listed.

Ex. 21:12, 13, it has been mistakenly thought, provides that the *altar* was appointed by God as a refuge for a manslayer. But that law, instead of making the altar of God an asylum for the manslayer, positively forbids its use as such. It was to furnish no protection, not even temporary protection, from death. A murderer might *think*, "Surely no one would have the gall to kill a man on God's altar!" Or, "Surely I will not be killed here, lest human blood defile the altar!" But God would say of a "presumptuous" murderer, "take him off the altar—do not spare him." So Adonijah and Joab both fled to the altar with the *hope* of being spared—but were slain, I K. 1:50-53; 2:24, 25; 28-34.

The cities of refuge, on the other hand, were not appointed to provide permanent asylum for murderers, but that every man who killed his neighbor might find protection there until the time of his trial, and might remain there after his trial, if he was not found worthy of death, until the death of the high priest. He could then return to his home if he wished.

THOU SHALT PREPARE THEE THE WAY (v. 3)—The Amplified O. T. renders v. 3, "You shall prepare the road, and divide the territory of your land, which the Lord your God gives you to possess, into three parts, so that any manslayer can flee to them." With a careful division of the land into thirds, and roads to the cities, access to them would be easier.

THREE CITIES (v. 7) . . . ADD THREE CITIES MORE FOR THEE, BESIDES THESE THREE (v. 9)—See note above. We have assumed that these last three are not again mentioned in the Bible, and probably were never appointed. The appointment of the six cities was "when . . ." but the appointment of the last three was "IF thou shalt keep all this commandment," etc. (v. 9). These periods were such brief flashes in Israel's history the job apparently never got done.

BUT IF ANY MAN HATE HIS NEIGHBOR (v. 11)—Whether this were true or not would be determined during his trial. Cf. Num. 35:9-34.

THOU SHALT PUT AWAY THE INNOCENT BLOOD (v. 13)—See 21:9 and notes, below.

(b) Expiation for an Unknown Murderer's Crime (21:1-9)

If one be found slain in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath smitten him; 2 then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: 3 and it shall be, that the city which is nearest unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; 4 and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 5 And the priests the son of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be. 6 And all the elders of that city, who are nearest unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley; 7 and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. 8 Forgive, O Jehovah, thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and suffer not innocent blood *to remain* in the midst of thy people Israel. And the blood shall be forgiven them. 9 So shalt thou put away the innocent blood from the midst of thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:1-9

316. Responsibility was such a vital part of the life of all Israel, all human life was of supreme importance. How are these two thoughts dramatized in this text?
317. Who was to pay for the heifer?
319. Why specify the particular type of heifer?
319. Why: the running water?; a field that has never been plowed nor sown?
320. The washing of hands to clear guilt is found elsewhere, name two.
321. How is the expression "innocent blood" used in verse 8 and 9?



# AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:1-9

If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess, lying in the field, and it is not known who has killed him.

2 Then your elders and judges shall come forth and measure the distance to the cities around him who is slain;

3 And the city which is nearest to the slain man, the elders of that city shall take a heifer, which has never been worked, never pulled in the yoke;

4 And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley.

5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name [and presence] of the Lord, and by their word shall every controversy and every assault be settled.

6 And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley;

7 And they shall testify, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.

8 Forgive, O Lord, Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, and do not allow the shedding of innocent blood to be charged to Your people Israel. And the guilt of blood shall be forgiven them.

9 So shall you purge the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

## COMMENT 21:1-9

Note that in v. 3, the city's leaders nearest the slain man were responsible for making expiation. The ritual outlined here was applicable to cases where murder was not (and perhaps *could* not be) expiated by the apprehension, conviction, and execution of the murderer. Until the mystery was unravelled, this formula would exonerate the city's inhabitants.

THE ELDERS . . . SHALL TAKE A HEIFER (v. 3)—It is to be one in full vigor and health, which has not seen domestic work, and consequently expressed in the fullest form the life-producing power to which the violent death stood as a contrast.

THE ELDERS . . . SHALL WASH THEIR HANDS (v. 6)—An assertion of their innocence and repudiation of their guilt. Cf. Ph. 26:6, 73:13; Matt. 27:24.

SO SHALT THOU PUT AWAY INNOCENT BLOOD (v. 9)—Or, (as in 19:13) the guilt of shedding innocent blood. By the formula prescribed, they would not be held guilty for the blood *already shed*, nor of *taking another man's blood* before he was proved guilty. When the process of justice was properly carried out, no innocent person's blood would be shed.

### (2) CONCERNING LANDMARKS (19:14)

14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:14

322. Why would anyone want to move a landmark? There might be more than one reason. Consider.
323. Read 27:17; Job 24:2; Proverbs 22:28; 23:10. The right of private ownership was an important factor in the prosperity and security of Israel. Remember this is a divine principle.
324. Is the same analogous comparison for some of the ancient Biblical land marks and their removal?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:14

14 You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess, which the men of old [the first dividers of the land] set.

### COMMENT 19:14

As the proper inheritance of one's property was determined by the landmarks, they were not to be altered by another. The old, or original one was to remain. See 27:17, Job 24:2, Prov. 22:28, 23:10. The story of Ahab and Jezebel seizing Naboth's vineyard (I K. 21) surely represents a flagrant disregard for this law.

### (3) CONCERNING WITNESSES AND JUDGMENT (19:15-21)

15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established.

16 If an unrighteous witness rise up against any man to testify against him of wrong-doing, 17 then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days; 18 and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; 19 then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. 20 And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee. 21 And thine eye shall not pity; life *shall* go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:15-21

325. Here is a safeguard against libel.
326. Read: Matthew 18:15-17; II Corinthians 13:1; I Timothy 5:19 for the New Testament application of this principle.
327. Once again: *responsibility* is the key word here. Specify the areas of responsibility.
328. A witness against a man put himself on trial and opened the possibility of his own punishment. He knew what possible punishment was in store; how?
329. The law as here stated was for prevention of crime. There was no revenge, spite, or hate involved, i.e. from the viewpoint of the innocent. Show how this was true.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:15-21

15 One witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or any wrong in connection with any sin he commits; only on the testimony of two or three witnesses shall a charge be established.

16 If a false witness rise up against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing.

17 Then both parties to the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days;

18 The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely,

19 Then you shall do to him as he had intended to do to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

20 And those who remain shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and shall henceforth commit no such evil among you.

21 Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

### COMMENT 19:15-21

17:2-13 should also be carefully reviewed and compared here, as well as 13:6-11. See lesson ten. But the present scripture covers "any iniquity . . . any sin" (v. 15).

TWO WITNESSES . . . OR THREE (v. 15)—As also specified in 17:6 in the case of an idolater, in Num. 35:30 in the case of murder, and in Matt. 18:15-17, II Cor. 13:1, I Tim. 5:19, in the church. This is a divine safeguard against the individual throwing around idle or speculative accusations. And as we have already seen in the cases of the murderer and idolater, unless the prosecutor is willing to abide by the divine formula for justice, he should not be bringing accusations. If he is unable to back up his claim with evidence and witnesses, and pursue the matter to the casting of the first stone, let him "forever hold his peace."

IF AN UNRIGHTEOUS WITNESS RISE UP (v. 16)—A witness had to have a reputation for fairness and honesty. "Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Ex. 23:1). David could say,

Unrighteous witness rise up  
They ask me of things that I know not.  
—Ps. 35:11

And again,

Deliver me not over unto the will  
of mine adversaries:  
For false witnesses are risen up  
against me,  
And such as breathe out cruelty.  
—Ps. 27:12

Naboth could have testified in a similar vein (I K. 21:8-10).

In such a case, the punishment of the false witness was to be the same as that intended for his fellow-Israelite (v. 19). *Another* safeguard against petty, trivial or indefinite accusations! "And those that remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil . . ." (v. 20).

AND THINE EYE SHALL NOT PITY; LIFE SHALL GO FOR LIFE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT (v. 21)—See also Ex. 21:22-25, Lev. 24:17-21. In the *present* case, the meaning seems to be that whatever punishment the false accuser had intended for his brother, it should be given to him. This would stop gossip, careless accusations, and especially *lying*. If he had intended to put his brother's eye out (by pinning certain charges against him) *his* eye was to be put out, probably by the accused. This would be determined by the judges and priests. Israel was not to get sentimental or "soft-hearted" in the matter—"thine eye shall not pity . . ." (What *should*, for example, have been done to Jezebel and Ahab, in the case cited above?)

As a *general* rule, this law stands as a law of *prevention* all the way through. Note the other passages. It was *not* a law intended to "get even," or justify retaliation. It was a civil code, and was to govern the decision of the *judges* in "court." But the Jews perverted this original purpose, and extended this law to their own private conduct—warping and twisting its meaning, for purposes of revenge (Matt. 5:38-42). ("You hit me, you *touch* me, and I'll gouge your eyes out!") Jesus not only rebukes this concept, but goes beyond the old law entirely, teaching a basic doctrine of physical nonresistance.

As the law was originally given, it did not allow for a spirit of spite, revenge, or hate. It was simply an edict to be carried out, once justice had been determined.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Three cities of refuge to be appointed in the midst of the promised land; the land being divided into three parts, a city is to be placed in each, a proper way to which is to be prepared, 1-3. In what cases of manslaughter the benefit of those cities may be claimed, 4-6. Three cities more to be added should the Lord enlarge their coasts, and the reasons why 7-10. The intentional murderer shall have no benefit from these cities, 11-13. The landmark is not to be shifted, 14. One witness shall not be deemed sufficient to convict a man, 15. How a false witness shall be dealt with—he shall bear the punishment which he designed should have been inflicted on his neighbor, 16-20. Another command to establish the lex talionis, 21.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FIFTEEN (19:1-21; 21:1-9)

(19:1-13)

1. What purpose did the cities of refuge serve?
2. How many cities did *God provide* for? (Careful!)
3. What protection was afforded the malicious murderer in Israel?
4. Did God also appoint the *altar* as a refuge? Explain.
5. Comment on this: "Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders . . . into three parts" (v. 3).

(21:1-9)

6. How was it determined *which city* should make expiation for the unknown murderer's crime?
7. Why did the elders of the city wash their hands? Were they *dirty*?
8. Note v. 9. What is meant by putting away "innocent blood"?

(19:14)

9. What was not to be "removed" in this lesson?

(19:15-21, 17:2-13)

10. What safeguard(s) would be involved by having two or three witnesses?
11. What punishment was due a false witness?
12. Explain 19:21, its purpose *here*, how the Pharisees abused it, and what Jesus taught in contrast.

## LESSON SIXTEEN 20:1-20; 21:10-14; 23:9-14

### g. RULES FOR CONDUCTING THE HOLY WAR (20:1-20; 21:10-14; 23:9-14)

#### (1) ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE PRIEST (20:1-4)

When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, thou shalt not be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be, when ye draw nigh unto battle, that the priests shall approach and speak unto the people, 3 and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye draw nigh this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye affrighted at them; 4 for Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:1-4

- 330. It is one thing to say "be not afraid," it is another matter to fulfill this attitude. What element makes it possible?
- 331. What was the particular job for the priest of these verses?
- 332. This was truly a "holy war." What so characterized it?
- 333. There must be a lesson in this for other nations. What is it?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:1-4

When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with you.

2 And when you come near to the battle, the priest shall approach and speak to the men,

3 And shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, you draw near this day to battle against your enemies; let not your [minds and] hearts faint; fear not, and do not tremble, or be terrified (and in dread) because of them.

4 For the Lord your God is He Who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. [I Sam. 17:45.]

#### COMMENT 20:1-4

"The instructions of this chapter are peculiar to Deuteronomy. As the people of God, Israel was not a warlike nation; they were rather to abstain from warfare, and as a general rule to cultivate the arts of

peace. But they had before them the prospect of a serious and protracted conflict before they could occupy the land which God assigned to them; and they might in future years have to go to war to maintain their independence and repel aggression. In view of this, instructions are here given regarding military services" (Pulpit).

THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID (v. 1)—See 3:22, 7:17-24, etc. See also our remarks under 1:30.

THE PRIEST (v. 2)—The Hebrew word *Kohen* is consistently so translated, and normally refers to that body of Levites that ministered to the Lord (18:1, notes). If that is so *here*, the priest designated to accompany Israel to war would call on Jehovah for help, and also act as exhorter and inspiration to the soldiers—a "chaplain." This was the *Lord's* war, fought by his people and against his enemies! \* See Num. 31:6, I Sam. 4:3 & 4, Num. 10:8, 9, II Chron. 13:10-12.

It was also the custom for a sacrifice to be offered (I Sam. 13) as a further appeal for God's blessing in battle. And sometimes Jehovah was consulted by the high priest before war, Judges 20:27, 28. It should be seen from all this that Israel's war—especially those having to do with conquering their promised land—were "Holy Wars." Because of this, God's chosen ministers were closely involved in its progress and success.

## (2) EXEMPTIONS FROM MILITARY SERVICE (20:5-9)

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. 6 And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not used the fruit thereof? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit thereof. 7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. 8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return to his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart. 9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of

\*We see no need to give "priest" an abnormal meaning here. Gesenius remarks that "there is a very old opinion of Hebrew writers, that *Kohen* also signifies *prince*." But the places in scripture where that definition might apply are, at best, few, and even those few are questioned. His function here was basically a religious one." . . . the field preacher, not the high priest" (Lange).



speaking unto the people, that they shall appoint captains of hosts at the head of the people,

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:5-9

334. The possibilities for deferment from military services were indeed varied. List them.
335. Wouldn't everyone claim exemption? Obviously man would not claim exemption. Why?
336. Cowardize was a recognized fault. We are in the greatest of all armies and engaged in a desperate conflict. Apply.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:5-9

5 And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man has planted a vineyard and has not used the fruit of it? Let him also return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit of it.

7 And what man has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her.

8 And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, What man is fearful and fainthearted? Let him return to his house, lest [because of him] his bretheren's [mind and] heart faint as does his own.

9 And when the officers finish speaking to the people, they shall appoint commanders at the head of the people.

### COMMENT 20:5-9

A house built but not dedicated; a vineyard planted but not harvested; a man betrothed but not married; a man faint-hearted but on the front lines of battle (i.e., a *coward*)—all these are allowed to return home until or unless their circumstances changed and they were thus qualified to wage war. In the case of the first three, if they died in battle it would be left to others to consummate what they had begun.

NEW HOUSE . . . NOT DEDICATED (v. 5)—"Probably formal possession was taken of the house by some solemn ceremony, followed by a festive entertainment" (Pulpit).

THAT HATH BETROTHED A WIFE (v. 7)—The Hebrew word *aras* signifies "to espouse a woman; properly, to make a spouse (Gesenius),

"become *engaged to (a girl), betroth (a wife)*" (Baumgartner). Cf. 28:30. Whether the wedding *ceremony* was over or not, he had not yet begun to make a home with his fiancée. Compare 24:5. In the economy of Israel, one betrothed was considered legally bound. See note, 22:23-27.

FEARFUL AND FAINT-HEARTED (v. 8)—"Is there anyone afraid and disheartened" (The Torah); "afraid and weak-hearted" (Berkely). And note the reason for sending him home—LEST HIS BRETHREN'S HEART MELT AS HIS HEART (v. 8)—His influence might spread like leaven, disheartening and discouraging the entire army (especially if there were several of them around!) Cf. 1:28.

It is not too hard to see that the same principle applies to those of us joined together in the warfare for Christ! Speak, act, and think discouragingly and, because we are *all* creatures of *influence*, others are caused to have feeble knees and weak hands. That is why Jesus taught "If ANY man would come after me [if any man would join his hosts and do battle against 'the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'], let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

### (3) TREATMENT OF CITIES IN FAR-OFF NATIONS (20:10-15)

10 When thou drawest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that are found therein shall become tributary unto thee, and shall serve thee. 12 And if it will make not peace with thee, then thou shalt besiege it: 13 and then Jehovah thy God delivereth it into thy hand, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: 14 but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take for a prey unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:10-15

337. For what particular cities were there instructions given? Why the difference in treatment of enemies?
338. Does this scripture sanction slavery?
339. Read Numbers 15:15, 16 for further information concerning this section.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:10-15

10 When you draw near to a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it.

11 And if that city makes an answer of peace to you and opens to you, then all the people found in it shall be tributary to you and they shall serve you.

12 But if it refuses to make peace with you and fights against you, then you shall besiege it;

13 And when the Lord your God has given it into your hands, you shall smite every male there with the edge of the sword.

14 But the women, the little ones, the beasts, and all that is in the city, all the spoil in it, you shall take for yourselves, and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the Lord your God has given you.

15 So shall you treat all the cities which are very far off from you, that do not belong to the cities of these nations.

COMMENT 20:10-15

PROCLAIM PEACE UNTO IT (v. 10)—They were to attempt peace negotiations on the terms specified.

SHALL BECOME TRIBUTARY (v. 11)—The Hebrew word *mas* Baumgartner defines as "forced labourers . . . forced services, task word," and here specifically, "be forced to taskwork." Thus the added phrase "and shall serve thee."

THOU SHALT SMITE EVERY MALE (v. 13)—The rest of the people could be spared, and taken captive. Those children or women who settled in Israel, however, when then subject to Israel's law (Num. 15:15, 16).

The law towards those people living in the area of Israel's promised land, however, was far different. See below.

(4) TREATMENT OF CANAANITE CITIES (20:16-18)

16 But of the cities of these peoples, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; 17 but thou shalt utterly destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; 18 that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so would ye sin against Jehovah your God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:16-18

340. Isn't there some admission of weakness in the need to utterly destroy these nations so "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations" . . . ?
341. Why not teach the other nations rather than learning from their teaching?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:16-18

16 But of the cities of these people, which the Lord your God gives you for inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes.

17 But you shall utterly exterminate them, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord your God has commanded you;

18 So they may not teach you all the abominable practices they have carried on for their gods, and so cause you to sin against the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 20:16-18

With these cities there was to be no arbitration, no peace conferences, no long negotiations for "peaceful coexistence." They were to be totally and finally destroyed. And God well knew what would happen if they were *not* (v. 18). See also 7:1-5 and notes.

## (5) RESPECT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES (20:19, 20)

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? 20 Only the trees of which thou knowest that they are not trees for food, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it fall.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:19, 20

342. Why would trees be destroyed? Why not destroy them?
343. What two-fold use was made of trees?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:19, 20

19 When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by using an ax on them, for you can eat their fruit; you must not cut them down, for is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you?

20 Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.

## COMMENT 20:19, 20

As we can now see, all is *not* fair in love and war! This law, strange as it may appear, was probably designed for Israel's own good. In the process of waging a long war (v. 19), when everything living in the path of combat would normally be destroyed, the *fruit* trees were to be spared.

FOR IS THE TREE OF THE FIELD MAN . . . ? (v. 19)—the Canaanites were being destroyed, not only to make way for Israel, but because of their *wickedness* as a nation Gen. 15:16, Lev. 18:24, 25. But the fruit-trees were to be spared. ". . . it was a merciful provision to spare all fruit-bearing trees, because they yielded the fruit which supported man's life; and it was sound policy also, for even the conquerors must perish if the means of life were cut off.

It is diabolic cruelty to add to the *miseries* of war the horrors of *famine*; and this is done where the trees of the field are cut down, the dykes broken to drown the land, the villages burnt, and the crops wilfully spoiled. *O execrable war!* Subversive of all the charities of life!" (Clarke).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY

*Directions concerning campaigns, 1. The priest shall encourage the people with the assurance that God will accompany and fight for them, 2-4. The officers shall dismiss from the army all who had just built a new house, but had not dedicated it, 5. All who had planted a vineyard, but had not eaten of its fruits, 6. All who had betrothed a wife, but had not brought her home, 7. And all who were timid and faint-hearted, 8. The commanders to be chosen after the timid, &c., had retired, 9. No city to be attacked till they had proclaimed conditions of peace to it, provided it be a city beyond the bounds of the seven Canaanitish*

*nations; if it submitted, it was to become tributary; if not, it was to be besieged, sacked, and all the males put to the sword; the women, children, and cattle to be taken as booty, 10-15. No such offers to be made to the cities of the Canaanites; of them nothing shall be preserved, and the reason, 16-18. In besieging a city no trees to be cut down but those who do not bear fruit, 19, 20.*

[See 21:1-9 discussed in lesson fifteen (II, B, 3, f.)]

#### (6) MARRYING WOMEN CAPTIVES (21:10-14)

10 When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and Jehovah thy God delivereth them into thy hands, and thou carriest them away captive, 11 and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and thou hast a desire unto her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife; 12 then thou shalt bring her home to thy house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not deal with her as a slave, because thou hast humbled her.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:10-14

344. How sad to be defeated when God planned victory. The lack of conquest was not because God had not already assured triumph. Why then was Israel not victorious?
345. Why would a pagan woman from a distance city be any more qualified for a wife than one from Canaan?
346. Why the shaving of the hair, paring nails, putting off raiment of captivity?
347. Show the protection and honor accorded these women. Why so?
348. Careful provision was made for the proper attitude in marriage. Discuss this as of today.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:10-14

10 When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God has given them into your hands, and you carry them away captive,

11 And you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her, that you may have her as your wife,

12 Then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head and pare her nails [in purification from heathenism],

13 And put off her prisoner's garb and shall remain in your house, and bewail her father and mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.

14 And if you have no delight in her, then you shall let her go absolutely free; you shall not sell her at all for money, you shall not deal with her as a slave or a servant, because you have humbled her.

### COMMENT 21:10-14

As in the case of the coming appointment of kings (17:14-17), this law is made as a *provision*, because of the *foreknowledge* of God. It is made in condescension to (not endorsement of) the weakness of men—and, incidentally, for the protection and honor of women.

This passage does not concern Canaanite cities, where "thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth (20:16), but distant cities where the males were either killed or taken as slaves, and the women and little ones taken as prey (20:10-15). No alliances or marriages were to be made with Canaanite women.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (v. 11)—The word "beautiful" is a translation of two Hebrew words *yephath*, beautiful, bright, fair, and *toar*, dilineation, form, body. Thus, literally, "beautiful of form." It is used of Rachel in Gen. 29:17, where Clarke says of the word, "beautiful in her *shape, person, mien, and gait*." In this trait, as well as being "well favored" (*yephath mareh*) she stood in contrast to Leah.

We would, of course, seriously question a man's wisdom who would choose his life's partner on such a superficial basis, with little or no chance to consider whether she was beautiful in *character*. We would wonder whether this "love at first sight" was not ninety per cent infatuation! We are tempted to warn him (as Solomon warned the young man of the seductress), "Lust not after her beauty in thy heart; Neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (Prov. 6:25). We would appeal to him on the basis of the overwhelming marital difficulties of taking a non-Israelite to wife—one who probably knew little or nothing of serving Jehovah God. "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; But a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

But regardless of all this, God provides what shall be done when such a one *is* taken. The question here is not what he *should* have done, but *what he should now do*.

**SHE SHALL SHAVE HER HEAD, AND PARE HER NAILS (v. 12)**—Both of these ceremonies, as well as the putting off of the garments worn when she was taken captive (v. 13), were signs of purification, separating her from her former heathenism, and preparing her for becoming a part of the people of God. Compare the law of the leper, Lev. 14:8, and the cleansing of the Levites, Num. 8:6, 7. Shaving the head was also a sign of *mourning*, Job 1:20, etc.

**PUT THE RAIMENT OF HER CAPTIVITY FROM OFF HER (v. 13)**—"the putting off her gorgeous dress in which ladies, on the eve of being captured arrayed themselves to be the more attractive to their captors." (J.F.B.) She then dons the garments of mourning and bewails her father and mother (who were now to her the same as dead) for thirty days. This period would also give her a chance to "pull herself together," adjust to her new condition, and otherwise prepare herself for her new life-role.

More and more now, her husband is to see her as she really is.

It is well to observe the protection afforded womanhood here. By general consent in ancient times, the women were considered part of the "spoils of war," and even in modern times this has often been true. Any one acquainted with the fearful license practiced among many nations towards female captives taken in war, can surely appreciate the humanizing influence these verses were intended to exert. A woman captive was not to be a plaything of passion or lust, but was to be dealt with honorably and with dignity. The requirements of this passage stand in sharp contrast to the conduct common among soldiers who have devastated a foreign power, and whose women are at their mercy.

**IF THOU HAVE NO DELIGHT IN HER (v. 14)**—This is after the marriage (v. 13). In the Hebrew home, the husband was unconditionally and unreservedly the head of his wife and family in all domestic relations. Nowhere is this headship more obvious than in his right to divorce. He might, under certain circumstances, divorce his wife—but it was much more difficult for her to reverse the procedure. And in view of her position here as "captive," she would have even less ability to claim her "rights" in marriage. See Num. 5:12-31, Duet. 22:13-21, and particularly in connection with this passage, 24:1-4.

If he *was* displeased with her, however, he could not retain her in some subordinate or inferior capacity.



THOU SHALT NOT DEAL WITH HER AS A SLAVE (v. 14)—The Hebrew word *amar*, rendered here by five English words, signifies "To show self a tyrant (Young), "deal violently, tyrannically with (Baumgartner). It occurs again in 24:7, where it is again rendered "as a slave." She had, in fact, become his *wife*, and she was not now to be dealt with as if she had *only* been a captive servant (20:14). She was to be free to go where her inclinations led.

## (7) UNCLEANNESS (23:9-14)

9 When thou goest forth in camp against thine enemies, then thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing. 10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: 11 but it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall bathe himself in water; and when the sun is down, he shall come within the camp. 12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp whither thou shalt go forth abroad: 13 and thou shalt have a paddle among thy weapons; and it shall be, when thou sittest down abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee; 14 for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:9-14

349. There are some very delicate subjects here discussed in a most candid and yet modest manner. This should offer some example for our approach and discussion of such subjects.
350. It will be of interest to note in this passage what God classifies as "unclean"; why so? Unclean in what sense? Cf. Numbers 5:1-4.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:9-14

9 When you go forth against your enemies and are in camp, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

10 If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what happens to him at night, then he shall go outside the camp, he shall not come with the camp;

11 But when evening comes he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he may return to the camp.

12 You shall have a place also outside the camp to which you shall go [as a comfort station];

13 And you shall have a paddle or shovel among your weapons, and when you sit down outside [to relieve yourself], you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up what has come from you.

14 or the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy, that He may see nothing indecent among you, and turn away from you.

### COMMENT 23:9-14

We have placed this section here because it obviously concerns warfare (v. 9).

FROM EVERY EVIL THING (v. 9)—Heb. *ra-a*, here, evil in the sense of blemish, uncleanness. Gesenius mentions that the word may imply “to be noxious, hurtful”—and there seems to be such overtones in this passage. The fact that they were *in camp* and in the midst of a *war*, did not relieve them of certain responsibilities. Discipline and safety are the rule in any army camp, and it is not difficult to see the wisdom of these words. All impurity and uncleanness was to be kept out. This *basic* rule of course, also applies to the camp as a whole, Num. 5:1-4.

### QUESTIONS, LESSON SIXTEEN

(20:1-20, 21:10-14, 23:9-14)

1. What function did the priest have who accompanied the army to the battlefield.
2. Was there a clear line of demarcation between civil and religious laws under the Old Covenant?
3. Can you recall the four classes of soldiers who could return home from the battlefield? (Finish before proceeding.)
4. What *reason* is given for allowing the “fearful and faint hearted” to return home?
5. Can you name two differences (related) between the way Israel’s army should treat *distant*, as contrasted with *Canaanite*, cities.
6. What kind of trees were not to be destroyed in battle?
7. In this lesson, what was the soldier’s reason for taking a foreign wife?
8. What was required of her before the marriage was official?
9. Discuss how 21:10-14 uphold such a woman’s dignity and honor.
10. Upon what basis could her husband let her go?
11. Why couldn’t he sell her as a slave?
12. What would *Jesus* have taught about such a marriage?

## LESSON SEVENTEEN 21:15—23:14

### h. FAMILY REGULATIONS (21:15-21)

#### (1) THE RIGHT OF THE FIRST-BORN (21:15-17)

15 If a man have two wives, the one beloved, and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated; 16 then it shall be, in the day that he causeth his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the hated, who is the first-born; 17 but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the hated, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:15-17

351. Why no word of censure for having two wives?
352. How could a son be "made" the first-born, if he was not?
353. Is it an inevitable conclusion that of two wives, one will be hated and one loved?
354. Why give the first-born twice as much?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:15-17

15 If a man has two wives, one loved and the other disliked, and they both have borne him children, and if the first-born son is hers who is disliked,

16 Then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he shall not put the first-born of his loved wife in place of the first-born of the disliked, who is older.

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the disliked as the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he was the first issue of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

### COMMENT 21:15-17

The wisdom of having two wives is not even discussed by the law-giver. As in so many other cases in this book, the evil is *anticipated* and the problem faced "as is," not "as hoped."

From an emotional and sentimental standpoint, the father would be tempted to give the son of the beloved wife the greater portion of his inheritance. But law and order crumbles before such sentimentality:

the firstborn was to receive his double portion regardless of the position his mother held in his father's esteem.

Remembering the favoritism Jacob showed to Joseph, though both of these were godly men, it is not difficult to see the need of this exhortation. Whatever the portion given the other sons, the portion allotted to the eldest son was to be twice as much. His right were to be honored.

#### (2) THE TREATMENT OF STUBBORN SONS (21:18-21)

18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and though they chasten him, will not hearken unto them; 19 then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:18-21

355. Here is parental discipline with a vengeance! Why was this necessary? Do you imagine it was practiced?
356. Notice the preventative measures taken before the corrective discipline was administered.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:18-21

18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or his mother, and though they chasten him, will not listen to them;

19 Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives,

20 And they shall say to the elders of his city, This our son is rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. [Prov. 23:20-22.]

21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall cleanse out the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and (reverently) fear.

## COMMENT 21:18-21

See also 5:16, 27:16 (and notes on both these passages), Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9, Prov. 30:17.

This case appears to deal especially with a son who had gained a reputation of gluttony and drunkenness (v. 20), and who would not be deterred from such a life in spite of his parent's exhortations. Their advice and chastisements were only met with stubbornness and rebellion. This son has not simply "slipped," or made a mistake—he has been defiant, unruly, and recalcitrant. The severe punishment given to him is illustrative of God's hatred for such sin.

AND ALL ISREAL SHALL HEAR, AND FEAR (v. 21)—One cannot imagine other young people witnessing such an event without being deeply sobered. When Ananias and Sapphira were struck down by God, "great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Some "object lessons" are too vivid and real to forget. This was to be a lesson for all Israel as well as punishment for one individual.

### i. THE SANCTITY OF THE LAND: MAN HANGED ON A TREE (21:22, 23)

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; 23 his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:22, 23

357. Read Joshua 10:22-27 and Numbers 25:4 to help understand this section
358. Was the hanging the cause of the death? What purpose was there in hanging on a tree?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:22, 23

22 And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and [afterward] you hang him on a tree, [Josh. 10:26, 27.]

23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall surely bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God; thus you shall not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance. [Gal. 3:13.]

## COMMENT 21:22, 23

Note how Joshua carried out this command in Josh. 10:22-27. See also Num. 25:4. This seems to be not a mode of execution *per se*, but rather a law concerning *exposure after death*. Ancient Syrian sculptures show naked men impaled at the top of long poles, and by the time of Esther the gallows (Est. 5:14—apparently a similar device) was employed for the same purpose—public exposure of a criminal as an object of warning to the people.

Crucifixion was a terrible method of punishment adopted later by the Romans from the Orient, and used by them only on slaves and the vilest of criminals. The victim was left to die of exhaustion, whereas *here* the victim was slain first. But it, too, involved hanging on a tree, and "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Cf. Gal. 3:13). Thus the death of our Savior by this means was doubly humiliating, simply from a standpoint of the opinion society had of such a "criminal."

And Paul's application is that in becoming such a curse *for us*, we may claim the promise of life.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

*If a man be found slain in a field, and the cause of his death be unknown, the murder shall be expiated by the sacrifice of a heifer in an uncultivated valley, 1-4. The rites to be used on the occasion, 5-9. The ordinance concerning marriage with a captive, 10-14. The law relative to the children of the hated and beloved wives: if the son of the hated wife should be the first-born he shall not be disinherited by the son of the beloved wife, but shall have a double portion of all his father's goods, 15-18. The law concerning the stubborn and rebellious son, who, when convicted, is to be stoned to death, 19-21. Of the person who is to be hanged, 22. His body shall not be left on the tree all night; every one that is hanged on a tree is accursed of God, 23.*

## j. LIFE IN THE NEW LAND: VARIOUS LAWS (22:1-12)

## (1) LOST POSSESSIONS (22:1-4)

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely bring them again unto thy brother. 2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it home to thy house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to

him. 3 And so shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his garment; and so shalt thou do with every lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found: thou mayest not hide thyself. 4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:1-4

359. Responsibility is again demanded. What is involved in the expression, "hide thyself"?  
 360. There is a reciprocal action involved here. How so?  
 361. Thoughtfulness and helpfulness are such grant virtues. Why do we need laws for them? Cf. Luke 10:27-37; 13:10-17.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:1-4

You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep being driven away or stolen, and hide yourself from [your duty to help] them; you shall surely take them back to your brother. [Cp. Prov. 24:12.]

2 And if your brother [the owner] is not near you, or if you do not know who he is, you shall bring the animal to your house, and it shall be with you until your brother comes looking for it; then you shall restore it to him.

3 And so shall you do with his donkey, or his garment, or with anything which your brother has lost and you have found; you shall not hide yourself from [your duty concerning] them.

4 You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down by the way, and hide from [your duty concerning] them; you shall surely help him to lift them up again.

## COMMENT 22:1-4

See also Ex. 23:4, 5. The finder of the lost article was not to avoid his responsibility of making a sincere effort to find the owner. And again, if his fellow Israelite's animal was found in need of help, he was not to avoid responsibility where he could be of *assistance*, much less exploit his brother's loss to his own advantage and betterment. Getting an animal or item back to its proper owner might involve "putting himself out" some, but the next day he might need the *same* services from his brother. By avoiding this duty, and "hiding himself," he could claim the animal or item as his own. But this childish "finders keepers, losers weepers" philosophy was not endorsed.

Verse 4 expresses a *principle of helpfulness* toward those in need. In this case it is with the man's animal—but Jesus would have us to be even more helpful when dealing with our fellow *man*—Luke 10:27-37, 13:10-17.

## (2) APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR THE SEX (22:5)

5 A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:5

362. Why such a strong prohibition against wearing clothes of the opposite sex?
363. Is God saying here we should be able to visibly tell whether a person is male or female? i.e. Should one appear to be the sex we are by the way we dress? Any modern day application for this?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:5

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 22:5

We are not told *why* God made this distinction in clothing—or even that the distinction *was* between the two types of clothing. But (especially when vv. 9-12 are compared) it appears quite obvious that God wanted Israel to recognize a *distinction*, a *difference*, and a *separation*. He wanted his people to know whether they were seeing a male or female.

But it is likely that the reason for prohibition goes beyond this. Transvestism (the practice of dressing in clothing of the opposite sex) has historically almost always been practiced by those who exemplified the *characteristics* of the opposite sex, and often these were homosexuals.\* To wear the clothing of the opposite sex would immediately "label" you in the community, and God would have the Israelites avoid

\*Transvestism, with its accompanying evils (such as sodomy) is still a relatively common practice among several aboriginal tribes. Several American Indian groups formerly gave these men places of *honor* among their tribes!



such a stigma. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches . . ." (Prov. 22:1). "A good name is better than precious oil . . ." (Ecc. 7:1).

By donning improper apparel, a woman might be known as an amazon or virago; a man might be thought effeminate. "The distinction between the sexes is natural and established by God in their creation, and any neglect or violation of that distinction, even in externals, not only leads to impurity, but involves the infractions of the laws of God." (Lange).

### (3) NESTING BIRDS (22:6, 7)

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: 7 thou shalt surely let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:6, 7

364. What lesson, or lessons, is in this concern of our heavenly Father for the mother bird?
365. What possible connection does the length of life have to do with saving a bird from death?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:6, 7

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before you in the way in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the mother bird is sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother bird with the young.

7 You shall surely let the mother bird go, and take only the young, that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days.

### COMMENT 22:6, 7

The young birds, and apparently the eggs, could be taken. But not the mother (dam). In Lev. 22:28, similarly, a cow or ewe could not be killed on the same day as its young.

Jesus said of the sparrows, ". . . not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God." And if God takes such graceful note of the "insignificant" matters of life, "Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6, 7).

## (4) BATTLEMENTS FOR NEW BUILDINGS (22:8)

8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:8

366. God was even interested in the design of the house, or was it another interest?  
 367. Read Numbers 35:33 and Genesis 9:6 and indicate how they relate to our text.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:8

8 When you build a new house, then you shall put a railing around your [flat] roof, so that no one may fall from there, and bring guilt of blood upon your house.

## COMMENT 22:8

The Hebrew word for battlement (*maaqeb*), a restraining, holding back, is simply rendered "parapet" by most modern translators and lexicons. This barrier for a flat roof was more than likely a low wall in most cases, perhaps a railing (Amplified O. T.) in others.

Its purpose, of course, was protection, lest the owner be guilty, in a roundabout way, of injuring or taking the life of another. It was a mandatory "safety feature" for each home.

THAT THOU BRING NOT BLOOD UPON THY HOUSE (v. 8)—Apparently the law of Num. 35:33, Cf. Gen. 9:6, would apply here, i.e., if the owner failed to take this precaution he would be liable for the death of any who accidentally fell from it.

## (5) FORBIDDEN MIXTURE (22:9-11)

9 Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited, the seed which thou hast sown, and the increase of the vineyard. 10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. 11 Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:9-11

368. Is it a horticultural fact that the mixture of seeds as here described would result in loss? Discuss.

369. The separation of the ox and the ass had some reason; what was it?

370. Why not wear wool and linen together?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:9-11

9 You shall not plant your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole crop be forfeited [under this ban], the seed which you have sown and the yield of the vineyard forfeited to the sanctuary.

10 You shall not plow with an ox [a clean animal] and a donkey [unclean] together. [2 Cor. 6:14-16.]

11 You shall not wear a garment of mingled stuff, wool and linen together. [Ezek. 4:18; Rev. 19:8.]

### COMMENT 22:9-11

Note the basic concept of *separation* which runs throughout these verses. The fact that two kinds of seed might grow quite well together, or that one could plow together quite well with an ox and an ass, or that linen (originating from flax) and wool might make a durable, warm, and nice-looking garment when combined, was *nothing to the point!* God had said they were not to be mixed! His word was to be respected and honored.

As a separated people, they were to live separated lives (Cf. I K. 8:53, etc.) Such laws as this would also distinguish and identify them as God's own people, different from all others.

Separation is as much a New Testament doctrine as Old—not the separation here spoken of, but the separation from the world and its ways that has *always* characterized God's true children. It is still very necessary that the child of God *distinguish* and *differentiate* in this world—an ability he develops more and more as he matures and grows into the likeness of his Master. Mature Christians should see the difference between light and darkness, sham and sincerity, truth and falsehood.

The "unequal yoke" of the ox and ass (v. 10) perhaps were in the very mind's eye of the apostle when he exhorted the Corinthian Christians, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity . . ." etc. (see II Cor. 6:14—7:1).

### (6) FRINGED GARMENTS (22:12)

12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four borders of thy vestures, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:12

371. Is Numbers 15:37-41 a commentary on this verse?  
 372. How was the purpose of this practice perverted? Cf. Matthew 23:5.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:12

12 You shall make yourselves tassels on the four corners of your cloak with which you cover yourself. [Num. 15:37-40.]

## COMMENT 22:12

The Hebrew word for "fringe" (*gadil*) occurs only in the plural in scripture. Gesenius has "*intertwined threads, twisted work.*" Baumgartner remarks that the basic meaning is "twist firmly," and defines it "tassel" here. This definition is followed by most modern translators, as well as the I.S.B.E.

In Num. 15:37-41 this law is also given,\* and note the purpose: as reminders of God's commandments.

As in the case of the exhortation to keep God's word ever before them (6:6-9), the purpose and spirit of *this* exhortation was lost in the effort "to be seen of men" (see Matt. 23:5). The borders of their garments, rather than being reminders of God's law, became reminders of their ostentation and pride. [Compare notes on 6:8.] Albert Barnes remarks, "This fringe was commanded in order to distinguish them from other nations, and that they might remember to keep the commandments of God . . . The Pharisees made them broader than other people [i.e., even other Hebrews] wore them, to show that they had peculiar respect for the law."

These tassels are apparently what the woman with the issue of blood touched when she touched the "border" of Christ's garment (Matt. 9:20), a gesture which also healed those who were sick in the area of Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34-36).

## k. SEX OFFENSES (22:13-30)

## (1) VIRGINITY OF A BRIDE (22:13-21)

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 and lay shameful things to her charge, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I

\*A different Heb. word is used in Numbers, but it seems obvious that the same law is being discussed.

found not in her the tokens of virginity; 15 then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate; 16 and the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 and, lo, he hath laid shameful things *to her charge*, saying, I found not in thy daughter the tokens of virginity; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him; 19 and they shall fine him a hundred *shekels* of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the damsel; 21 then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:13-21

373. Is this section a protection for the wife or for the husband?
374. How would a garment produced by the parents of the wife answer the problem?
375. Either supernatural knowledge or basic honesty plays an important role here, discuss.
376. Adultery was a serious sin; a life and death matter. Is it today? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:13-21

13 If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and then scorns her,

14 And charges her with shameful things and gives her an evil reputation, and says, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I did not find in her the tokens of a virgin,

15 Then the father of the young woman, and her mother, shall get and bring out the tokens of her virginity to the elders of the city in the gate;

16 And her father shall say to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he hates and spurns her,

17 And, lo, he has made shameful charges against her, saying, I found not in your daughter the evidences of her virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city.

18 And the elders of that city shall take the man and rebuke and whip him;

19 And they shall fine him 100 shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not divorce her all his days.

20 But if it is true that the evidences of virginity were not found in the young woman,

21 Then they shall bring her to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death; because she has wrought [criminal] folly in Israel, by playing the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

### COMMENT 22:13-21

Questioning the virginity of a man's bride was a serious matter in Israel—and these words were doubtless intended both as an incentive for the bride to present herself undefiled to her husband, and as a deterrent to husbands who might be prone to unjustly accuse their wives of unchastity before marriage. Certainly nothing is more utterly humiliating to a woman with a good name than to be so accused. "No act can be conceived more cruel or dastardly than that of a man who groundlessly assails his wife's character, accusing her of ante-nuptial unchastity. As the matter was one proof of which was not directly possible, and the man's word was all that could be adduced on his side, the Law threw the onus of clearing herself upon the woman through her parents, and indicated the mode of doing so." (Pulpit)

THE TOKENS OF VIRGINITY (v. 14) i.e., proofs of chastity.—In v. 17 this phrase seems to be used synonymously with the woman's *garment* that was spread before the elders of the city. A woman's dress depicted much about her marital status in the east, and still does in many areas. In Genesis, ch. 38, for example, Tamar is identified by her *dress* at one time as a widow, and another as a harlot (Gen. 38:14, 15, 19).

The word rendered "garment," Heb. *simlah*, (A.V. *cloth*) refers to her "wrapper, mantle" (Baumgartner). It is especially used of that garment which was wrapped around oneself at night for comfort and

warmth, though it was worn at other times also. Apparently this "proof garment" was kept by her parents for such an occasion, as would need its display—probably put away at the time of her marriage.

Note the severe punishment that was to be given a husband who dared to bring a false accusation against his wife—and hence ruin her name and reputation. He was to be scourged and fined, and legally bound out from ever divorcing the wife he had so abused.

## (2) ADULTERY (22:22)

22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away the evil from Israel.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:22

377. So much is left to the imagination in the circumstances here described. If a girl, even one who is "betrothed" finds a boy she likes better than her betrothed, why not marry him?
378. Did the "man" of verse 23 have a personal interest in the damsel?
379. Compare John 8:5 for a possible example. Who is missing?
380. Supposing the girl "in the field" consented to the action, how shall this be handled?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:22

22 If a man is found lying with another man's wife, they shall both die, the man who lay with the woman and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

## COMMENT 22:22

See also 5:18, Lev. 20:10. *Both* were to die, as both were guilty. (Compare the case of the woman taken in adultery—note Jn. 8:5. Where was her partner?)

## (3) DEFILEMENT OF A MAIDEN BETROTHED (22:23-27)

23 If there be a damsel that is a virgin betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them to death with stones; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and he man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

25 But if the man find the damsel that is betrothed in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her; then the man only that lay with her shall die: 26 but unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter; 27 for he found her in the field, the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:23-27

23 If a maiden who is a virgin is engaged to be married, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24 Then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and shall stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he has violated his neighbor's [promised] wife. So shall you put away evil from among you.

25 But if a man finds the betrothed maiden in the open country, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.

26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no sin punishable by death, for this is as when a man attacks and slays his neighbor;

27 For he came upon her in the open country, and the betrothed girl cried out, but there was not one to save her.

### COMMENT 22:23-27

In the case of the maiden in the city, it is assumed assistance and help is available to the girl if she *wants* it. Therefore both are held responsible for the crime. But with the maiden in the country no such assistance is likely to be available. It is assumed that "the damsel cried, and there was none to save her." In this case only the man shall die. She is compared to the victim of a murderer (v. 26).

Note the sanctity and sacredness of the "engagement" period. The betrothed man and maid are referred to already as "husband" and "wife." To be sure, it was a much more firm and binding contract than today. "Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part . . . Its central feature was the dowry (*mohar*), which was paid to the parents, not to the bride. It may take the form of service (Gen. 29; I Sam. 18:25) . . . Among the Jews



the betrothal was so far regarded as binding that, if marriage should not take place, owing to the absconding of the bridegroom or the breach of contract on his part, the young woman could not be married to another man until she was liberated by a due process and a paper of divorce . . . A prolonged interval between betrothal and marriage was deemed undesirable on many accounts, though often an interval was needed that the groom might render the stipulated service or pay the price—say a year or two, or as in the case of Jacob, it might be seven years. The betrothed parties were legally in the position of a married couple, and unfaithfulness was 'adultery,' (Dt. 22:23; Mt. 1:19)." (I.S.B.E.)

#### (4) DEFILEMENT OF A MAIDEN NOT BETROTHED (22:28, 29)

28 If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, that is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; 29 then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:28, 29

381. Read Exodus 22:16, 17 to complete the record.
382. Who is considered responsible in this circumstance?
383. Is the girl to be considered innocent? What of love in this marriage.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:28, 29

28 If a man find a girl who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found,

29 Then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her; he may not divorce her all his days.

#### COMMENT 22:28, 29

By comparing Ex. 22:16, 17, it appears that the father might not accept the new "son-in-law"—but he was still to accept the money. Her husband was not allowed to divorce her throughout their days.

In the case mentioned above it is not *stated* that the maiden was at fault in any way—only what was to be done when the crime had been committed. She may (knowingly or unknowingly) have unduly tempted

him. Or she may have been ignorant of his evil intentions. The book *Scientific Illustrations* states the latter case well:

"Flamingoes are very shy and timid birds, and shun all attempts of man to approach them; the vicinity of animals, however, they disregard. Any one who is acquainted with this fact can take advantage of it by dressing himself up in the skin of a horse or an ox. Thus disguised, the sportsman may get close to them and shoot them down at his ease. They are taken in by appearances. Shy, beautiful, and harmless, the unfortunate bird meets destruction simply for want of wariness. Many a lovely human being with the like qualities has met her doom for want of the same trait."

#### (5) IMPURITY TOWARD A FATHER'S WIFE (22:30)

30 A man shall not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:30

- 384. Consider Leviticus 18:8; 20:11 and Deuteronomy 27:20 for a complete perspective.
- 385. Is this a sin of incest?
- 386. How is the word "skirt" used here?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:30

30 A man shall not take his father's former wife, nor shall he uncover her who belongs to his father.

#### COMMENT 22:30

See also 27:20, Lev. 18:8; 20:11. The sin here is not necessarily with one's mother, for frequently a husband had two or more wives. Note the distinction between Lev. 18:7 and 18:8. Inasmuch as a wife was considered the husband's possession and property, it was "his father's skirt." Reuben's sin was similar, Gen. 35:22, as was also Absalom's, II Sam. 16:20-22.

#### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

*Ordinances relative to strayed cattle and lost goods, 1-3. Humanity to oppressed cattle, 4. Men and women shall not wear other's apparel,*

5. No bird shall be taken with her nest of eggs or young ones, 6, 7. Battlements must be made on the roofs of houses, 8. Improper mixtures to be avoided, 9-11. Fringes on the garments, 12. Case of the hated wife, and the tokens of virginity, and the proceedings thereon, 13-21. The adulterer and adulteress to be put to death, 22. Case of the betrothed damsel corrupted in the city, 23, 24. Cases of rape and the punishment, 25-27; of fornication, 28, 29. No man shall take his father's wife, 30.

### 1. EXCLUSION FROM THE CONGREGATION (23:1-14)

#### (1) PERMANENT EXCLUSION FOR THE SEXUALLY MUTILATED, CHILDREN BORN OF ILLEGITIMATE UNION AND CERTAIN ENEMY PEOPLE (23:1-6)

He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

2 A bastard shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah; even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

3 An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of Jehovah for ever; 4 because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless Jehovah thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:1-6

387. Was the exclusion of the sexually mutilated a fair regulation? Discuss.
388. We can see reason for the exclusion of the bastard, but why the rest of the generations?
389. Evidently there is a time and circumstance when even God gives up. Is this a fair conclusion about what is said of the Ammonite and the Moabite?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:1-6

He who is wounded in the testicles, or has been made a eunuch, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

2 A person begotten out of wedlock shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall his descendants not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

3 An Ammonite or \*Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation their descendants shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord for ever;

4 Because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, against you to curse you.

5 Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing to you, because the Lord your God loved you.

6 You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days for ever.

## COMMENT 23:1-6

In all these verses the purity and separateness of God's people is being maintained—and they should be studied with this in mind.

AN AMMONITE OR A MOABITE SHALL NOT ENTER (v. 3)—These two peoples were related to Israel through Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:36-38). Two reasons are given here for excluding them from the assembly:

1. Their lack of hospitality when Israel came out of Egypt (v. 4).
2. They hired Balaam to curse Israel (v. 4). See II Pet. 2:12-16, Jude 11.

Moab's actions toward Israel are recorded in Numbers 22-25. Their influence upon the Hebrews was in every way degrading. Ammon's treatment was apparently similar—their border was strong (Num. 21:24), Israel was to avoid conflict with them when entering Canaan (Dt. 2:19) and they evidently joined Moab in the hiring of Balaam. Both of these tribes were later thorns in Israel's flesh, Jud. 3:12, 13; 11:4, etc.

\*It must be remembered that the children, according to the Jewish law, followed the father, not the mother. [That is, the family of Boaz for example, although his wife Ruth was a Moabitess, was considered Israelite, including his wife.] The case of Ruth would not, therefore, be touched by this precept (*Ellicott's Commentary*).

(2) TEMPORARY EXCLUSION FOR EGYPTIANS, MOABITES  
AND PHYSICALLY UNCLEAN (23:7-14)

7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a sojourner in his land.  
8 The children of the third generation that are born unto them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

9 When thou goest forth in camp against thine enemies, then thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing. 10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: 11 but it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall bathe himself in water; and when the sun is down, he shall come within the camp. 12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad; 13 and thou shalt have a paddle among thy weapons; and it shall be when thou sittest down abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: 14 for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:7-14

390. Why the lenient attitude toward the Egyptians? Were they not idolators? Discuss.
391. Read verse 14 first, then read verses 9 through 13. If Jehovah was so near then what of today?
392. There must be some connection between physical uncleanness and moral defilement. Discuss.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:7-14

7 You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother [Esau's descendant]. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger and temporary resident in his land.

8 Their children may enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation.

9 When you go forth against your enemies and are in camp, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

10 If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what happens to him at night, then he shall go outside the camp, he shall not come within the camp;

11 But when evening comes he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he may return to the camp.

12 You shall have a place also outside the camp to which you shall go [as a comfort station];

13 And you shall have a paddle or shovel among your weapons, and when you sit down outside [to relieve yourself], you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up what has come from you.

14 For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy, that He may see nothing indecent among you, and turn away from you.

### COMMENT 23:7-14

The Edomites, as descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, and the Egyptians, because Israel sojourned in their land, were to be allowed into the assembly of the congregation after three generations within Israel's borders. Egypt, of course, has been the "spawning ground" of Israel—beginning with seventy souls (Gen. 46:27), and leaving some four hundred years later with a great host which must have totaled well over two million (See the Introduction, II).

Those men deemed unclean while Israel was encamped against the enemy (vv. 9-14) were also to be excluded until they had complied with the cleansing formula here described. See the *Rules for conducting the Holy War*, (II, B, g, 7) following 21:14.

### QUESTIONS, LESSON SEVENTEEN (21:15—23:14)

1. How much of the inheritance was the first-born son to receive?
2. If such a son was born of a wife that was hated, could this law be changed?
3. What was the proper treatment of stubborn sons under the Mosaic law?
4. Was Moses describing a single infraction on the part of this son?
5. What purpose did this have besides punishing the offender?
6. What purpose would be served by hanging a dead man on a tree?
7. Why not let him hang all night?
8. How did this Jewish law differ from the *crucifixion* of the Romans?
9. What was an Israelite to do when he found a lost article or animal?
10. Why not wear the clothing of the opposite sex?
11. What could *not* be taken from the bird's nest?

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON SEVENTEEN

12. What safety feature was required on their new homes?
13. Give a possible reason for not mixing kinds of seed, cloth, etc.
14. Why have fringed (tasseled) garments?
15. How did the Pharisees exploit and pervert this purpose?
16. Who was to prove the virginity of his married daughter when it was challenged? How? Before whom?
17. How was adultery punished?
18. What distinction was made between the defilement of a betrothed maiden who lived in the *country* and one who lived in the *city*?
19. Why were the Ammonites and Moabites excluded from the assembly?
20. The Edomites and Egyptians were both excluded for only three generations, but for different reasons. What reasons?

## LESSON EIGHTEEN 23:15—24:22

### m. LAWS OF SOCIETY AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS

(23:15—26:19)

#### (1) TREATMENT OF ESCAPED SLAVES (23:15, 16)

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: 16 he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleaseth him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:15, 16

393. No such provision was made for a runaway Hebrew servant. Cf. 15:12-18. Why such a provision for outsiders?  
394. The motive for running away is at least suggested. What is it?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:15, 16

15 You shall not give up to his master a servant who has escaped from his master to you;

16 He shall dwell with you in your midst, where he chooses in one of your towns, where it pleases him best. You shall not defraud or oppress him.

#### COMMENT 23:15, 16

"The reference is to a foreign slave who had fled from the harsh treatment of his master to seek refuge in Israel, as is evident from the expression . . . 'in one of thy gates,' i.e. in any part of the land." (Pulpit) No such provision is made for runaway Hebrew servants, about which see 15:12-18 and notes; compare 22:1-3.

#### (2) MORALITY, ILLEGITIMATE PRACTICES AND WAGES (23:17, 18)

There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. 18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:17, 18

395. Is a sodomite the masculine form of a prostitute?  
396. There seems to be a strong emphasis upon sex in both the heathen nations and in the life of Israel. Why?



397. Was the practice of such persons so common that some of them claimed a place in the worship of Jehovah? Discuss.
398. It is a sad day when a dog can be used to exploit the erotic desires of man, Cf. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; 20:15, 16. Or is this the meaning of the text?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:17, 18

17 There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute (a sodomite) of the sons of Israel.

18 You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the price of a dog [a sodomite] into the house of the Lord your God, in payment for a vow; for both of these—the gift and the giver—are an abomination to the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 23:17, 18

PROSTITUTE . . . SODOMITE (v. 16)—These words represent the feminine and masculine of the same Hebrew root. The word is *Kedesbab* in the first instance, *Kabesh* in the second—a woman who devoted herself to immoral practices as a part of her heathen and idolatrous "worship," and a man who did the same. The root *kedesh* literally signifies *sanctuary*, a reference to the idolatrous houses where these practices were carried on. These persons were "sanctified" or "set aside for an (un)holy purpose" by the religions in and around Canaan.

Of the female member of the class, the I.S.B.E. states, "She was a *kedhesbab*, one of a consecrated class, and as such was a concrete expression and agent of the most insidious and powerful influence and system menacing the purity and permanence of the religion of Jehovah. This system defied the reproductive organs and forces of nature and its devotees worshipped their idol symbols in grossly licentious rites and orgies. The temple prostitute was invested with sanctity as a member of the religious caste . . . The Canaanite sanctuaries were gigantic brothels, legalized under the sanctions of religion."

The "wares" of these women, however, were not always sold in the sanctuaries. See Gen. 38:15-23, where Tamar poses as a "prostitute" (*kedeshbab*) as well as a "harlot" (*zanab*), a more general word (see below). Note Hosea 4:11-19, where both of these words again occur, aptly depicting both the *moral and spiritual* degradation of Israel.

The male prostitute (sodomite) was normally attached to one of these sanctuaries also, though, like his female counterpart, his practices were apparently not restricted to that area. (Gen. 19:5, etc.) Josiah had to break down their houses "that were in the house of Jehovah, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah" (II K. 23:7)—a passage which testifies of its great influence as a practice. In both ancient and modern societies, sodomites have frequently been transvestites—a fact to remember in the exhortation of 22:5. See also Lev. 18:22, 20:13.

HIRE OF A HARLOT (v. 18)—i.e. the wages or income she obtained by her practices. The Heb. word here rendered "harlot" (*Zanab*) is more general than "prostitute" (*kedeshah*) above, *including* her but also any others given over to illicit sexual relations (cf. its use in 22:21). This woman might not be "religious" even by heathen standards.

THE WAGES OF A DOG (v. 18)—i.e. the wages some owner of a dog might charge for his relations with an Israelite. See Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15, 16. Others believe "dog" is here used figuratively as a derisive term for the sodomite.

In either case, illicitly and illegally gained money was not to be contributed to *Jehovah God*. Money so gained was shrouded with sin and impurity. Using it for the sanctuary of God would be tantamount to robbing a bank so the money could be contributed to the church building fund!

### (3) INTEREST ON LOANS (23:19, 20)

19 Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother; interest of money, interest of victuals, interest of any thing that is lent upon interest: 20 unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest in to possess it.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:19, 20

399. Why not lend with interest to our brother? Does this relate to our day? Discuss.
400. How shall we connect the blessing of the Lord with lending without interest?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:19, 20

19 You shall not lend on interest to your brother, interest on money, on victuals, on anything that is lent for interest.

20 You may lend on interest to a foreigner; but to your brother you shall not lend on interest, that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land to which you go to possess it.

## COMMENT 23:19, 20

The amount of interest which could be charged to foreigners is not stated, but no interest was to be charged a fellow-Israelite. See also Ex. 22:25-27, Lev. 25:35-37, Neh. 5:6-10, Ezek. 18:5-9. If they were obedient, they would indeed lend as a *nation*, ch. 28:12.

## (4) MAKING AND KEEPING VOWS (23:21-23)

21 When thou shalt vows a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed unto Jehovah thy God, a freewill-offering, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:21-23

401. Jephthah was not the only man who "opened his mouth unto Jehovah" and could not go back. A promise to God is no light matter.
402. In what sense is a vow a "free-will offering"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:21-23

21 When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack in paying it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and slackness would be sin in you.

22 But if you refrain from vowing, it will not be sin in you.

23 The vow which has passed your lips you shall be watchful to perform, a voluntary offering which you have made to the Lord your God, which you have promised with your mouth.

## COMMENT 23:21-23

See also Num. 30:1, 2, Ecc. 5:4, 5. This passage apparently applies to those freewill offerings and vows an Israelite could make to God. An Israelite was to be a "man of his word"—what he *said* he was to *do*!

A terrible example of a man who rashly vowed is found in the case of Jephthah, Judges 11:29-30.

## (5) PARTAKING OF A NEIGHBOR'S CROP (23:24, 25)

24 When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou mayest eat of grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. 25 When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:24, 25

403. Why was this provision made? Consider two viewpoints.

404. Jesus' disciples made use of this law. Cf. Matt. 12:1ff.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:24, 25

24 When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes as many as you please; but you shall not put any in your vessel.

25 When you come into the standing grain of your neighbor, you may pluck the ears with your hand; but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

## COMMENT 23:24, 25

In both the vineyard and the grain-field, the rule is based on the principle of providing for the *immediate needs* of the individual who passed through the field. They were not allowed to lay up a reserve of either crop.

Jesus' disciples used this law to their advantage, Matt. 12:1 ff. The Pharisees' rebuke in that instance was doubtless based on such passages as Ex. 31:12-17, Num. 15:32-36. But they forgot at least two considerations: 1. Preservation of *human life* is a principle over-shadowing sabbath-keeping, 2. Christ himself is Lord and Master of the sabbath.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

*Neither eunuchs, bastards, Ammonites, nor Moabites, shall be incorporated with the genuine Israelites, 1-3. The reason why the Ammonites and Moabites were excluded, 4-6. Edomites and Egyptians to be respected, 7. Their descendants in the third generation may be incorporated with the Israelites, 8. Cautions against wickedness when they go forth against their enemies, 9. To keep the camp free from every defilement, and the reason why, 10-14. The slave who had taken refuge among them is not to be delivered up to his former master, 15, 16. There shall be no prostitutes nor sodomites in the land, 17. The hire of a prostitute or the price of a dog is not to be brought into the house of God, 18. The Israelites shall not lend on usury to each other, 19; but they may take usury from strangers, 20. Vows must be diligently paid, 21-23. In passing through a vineyard or field a man may eat of the grapes or corn, but must carry away none with him, 24, 25.*

## (6) DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (24:1-4)

When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; 4 her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:1-4

405. Since this text has been variously used and abused, it should merit our most careful reading and thought.
406. Read through the fourth verse for the complete thought. What is it?
407. In this passage, as in many others, certain wrong practices of the people are assumed. Moses (and God) deal with life "as is." What is assumed in this passage?

408. Read Matt. 19:3-9. Does our Lord approve of the prevalence and purposes for divorce as given in Deuteronomy? Cf. Matt. 5:31, 32.
409. How would the violations of the regulations specified here "cause the land to sin"? Cf. vs. 4.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:1-4

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house,

2 And when she departs out of his house, she goes and marries another man,

3 And if the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; or if the last husband dies, who took her as his wife,

4 Then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord; and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

### COMMENT 24:1-4

See also 22:13-21, 21:10-14, Matt. 5:31, 32, 19:3-9. The law of Jealousy (Num. ch. 5) should also be kept in mind.

A great deal of discussion has been occasioned by the phrase "some unseemly thing in her" (v. 1). Some critics insist that the phrase has a moral connotation: "Some indecency in her" (R.S.V., Amplified O.T., Smith.) "... he has found her immodest in some way" (Moffatt). But although the phrase is literally rendered "a thing or matter of nakedness," the reference is more general, "i.e. some shameful thing, something disgraceful" (Pulpit). Indeed, we have already seen that adultery was punishable by death under the Mosaic law (22:22, Lev. 20:10). The Pharisees substituted the phrase "for every cause" (Matt. 19:3) in their questioning of Jesus. And it does appear that this law, given by Moses because of the hardness of their hearts, enabled a man to divorce his wife on sometimes very flimsy grounds. But, as the Pulpit Commentary remarks, "This is not a law sanctioning or regulating divorce; that is simply assumed as what might occur and what is here regulated is the treatment by the first husband of a woman who has been divorced a second time."

Edwin C. Bissell, in *Bible-Work*, states, "This regulation is remarkable alike for its concessive and its restrictive character. It assumes the prevalence of divorce—a fact also recognized in a number of other laws of this and the Levitical code (Lev. 21:7 [13, 14] De. 22:19, 29). It assumes that it was carried on with some degree of formality. And such a custom, with the form it took of giving a 'bill of divorcement,' this law does not forbid; neither does it command it. Herein our Lord corrected the Pharisees' false quotation of the Pentateuch, chaging their 'Why did Moses command?' into 'Moses suffered.' In its restrictions, on the other hand, the law assumes the sacredness of the marital tie and provides against an obvious tendency to break and renew it at will. Its sole prohibition, however, is of the remarriage of divorced persons after a second marriage had been entered upon by the former wife."

Behrends continues in the same book, "The Mosaic legislation permitted a certain liberty of divorce; but our Lord only brought into clear relief, and made emphatic for all time, its determining ethical principle, when he declared that the Mosaic permission was an unwilling concession to the 'hardness' of the people's heart; that from the beginning marriage was not so contemplated and constituted, that man may not 'put asunder what God hath joined together;' that divorce is permissible only 'for the cause of fornication;' that [permanent or prolonged] separation for any other cause is an incentive to adultery, and that whoever contracts marriage with the guilty party commits adultery."

#### (7) BRIDEGROOM EXEMPT FROM WARFARE (24:5)

5 When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host, neither shall he be charged with any business: he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he hath taken.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:5

410. Was there any advantage for the government in the above regulation?
411. How shall we compare this rule with the provision for divorce?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:5

5 When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife who he has taken.

## COMMENT 24:5

See also 20:7, notes. As Matthew Henry remarks, this law would promote *love* and tend to *establish the bond* between this couple, and stands somewhat in contrast to the former law allowing divorce. He was neither to go to war, or be charged with "business" (Heb. *dabar*), literally word, thing; here, business, affair, or restricting labor of any kind. All this enabled him to "cheer his wife"—"Enjoy the wife he has married," (Benton), "to give happiness to the woman he has married" (Torah). As we are repeatedly seeing in this book, the feminine half of the marriage had privileges and blessings which represent only a foretaste of what was to come under Christ.

## (8) MILLSTONES NOT TO BE TAKEN IN PLEDGE (24:6)

6 No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a *man's* life to pledge.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:6

412. What would be a synonym for the word "pledge"?  
 413. Why would anyone be willing to give a millstone as a pledge?  
 Approximate a circumstance (imaginary) where this would be true.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:6

6 No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.

## COMMENT 24:6

The A.V. has "the nether or the upper millstone". J.F.B. remarks, "The 'upper' stone being concave, covers the 'nether' like a lid; and it has a small aperture, through which the corn [grain] is poured, as well as a handle by which it is turned. The propriety of the law was founded on the custom of grinding corn [grain] every morning for daily consumption. If either of the stones, therefore, which composed the hand-mill was wanting, a person would be deprived of his necessary provision."

## (9) KIDNAPPING A FELLOW-ISRAELITE (24:7)

7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave, or sell him; then that thief shall die: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.



## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:7

414. What is the "Lindberg law" on kidnapping? How does it relate here?
415. Cf. Exodus 21:16 and notice how all encompassing was this law.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:7

7 If a man be found kidnapping any of his brethren of the Israelites, and treats him as a slave or a servant, or sells him, then that thief shall die. So you shall put evil from among you.

## COMMENT 24:7

Compare Ex. 21:16 The thief was to die regardless as to what he had done with his "loot"—whether he had made him a slave, sold him, or whatever.

## (10) LAWS OF LEPROSY TO BE OBSERVED (24:8, 9)

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. 9 Remember what Jehovah thy God did unto Miriam, by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:8, 9

416. Read Leviticus chapters 13 and 14 to understand what the priests and Levites would teach concerning leprosy.
417. What possible two-fold reason could there be in mentioning Miriam in these verses?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:8, 9

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that you watch diligently, and do according to all that the Levitical priests shall teach you, As I commanded them, so you shall be watchful and do. [Lev. 13:14, 15.]

9 Remember [earnestly] what the Lord your God did to Miriam by the way, after you had come out of Egypt. [Num. 12:10.]

## COMMENT 24:8, 9

Laws concerning leprosy are found in Lev. 13 and 14. Note there that the priests are again and again involved in testing for leprosy and the cleansing process. Cf. Matt. 8:4. Moses *here* simply exhorts them to *heed* the priests instructions—instructions which *God* had given them.

The case of Miriam is probably cited not only because Miriam became leprous (Num. ch. 12), but because she became such as a result of her disobedience and disrespect for Moses' authority. As disobedience had *caused* her leprosy, disobedience could *prevent the healing* of leprosy. And as God, being merciful, healed Miriam, so could he heal them if they would "do according to all that the Levites shall teach you".

#### (11) PLEDGE FOR A LOAN (24:10-13)

10 When thou dost lend thy neighbor any manner of loan, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. 11 Thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou does lend shall bring forth the pledge without unto thee. 12 And if he be a poor man, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; 13 thou shalt surely restore to him the pledge when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his garment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before Jehovah thy God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:10-13

418. Please read the following references for a complete understanding of this circumstance: 15:7-11; 23:19, 20; Ex. 22:25-27.
419. List the qualities of character necessary to fulfill this injunction; such as: (1) compassion, (2) patience, (3) kindness.
420. What type of "righteousness" is involved in vs. 13?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:10-13

10 When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge.

11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you.

12 And if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge over night.

13 You shall surely restore to him the pledge at sunset that he may sleep in his garment and bless you; and it shall be credited to you as righteousness (rightness and justice) before the Lord your God.

#### COMMENT 24:10-13

See also 15:7-11, 23:19, 20, and especially Ex. 22:25-27. The creditor was to be considerate of the comfort and warmth of the borrower, and he was not to invade the personal property rights of this

poor man. It is proverbial that "The rich ruleth over the poor; And the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7) but such despotism was not to characterize Israelites' financial dealings with one another.

A poor man might only have one or two items of clothing—he very often slept in the same clothes he wore. The normal garments for the poor were "long, loose garments . . . still used among the Arabs, and called *bykes*, which is a kind of blanket, something resembling a highland plaid, in which they often carry their provision, wrap themselves by day and sleep at night." (Clarke, writing about 1830). Thus the holder of this pledge was to return it by nightfall.

#### (12) PAYING THE POOR HIRED SERVANT (24:14, 15)

14 Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: 15 in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:14, 15

421. If Jehovah loved all His children with an equal love, why are some poor and others rich?
422. What is suggested in the word "oppress" as here used?
423. Nothing is said of the "pay scale." Why not? Are all servants to be paid every day? Discuss.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:14, 15

14 You shall not oppress or extort from a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is of your brethren, or of your strangers and sojourners who are in your land inside your towns.

15 You shall give him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down; for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it; lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.

#### COMMENT 24:14, 15

See also Lev. 19:13. As in the previous case the pledged garment was to be *returned* on the same day before the sun set, so here he was to be *paid* the same day and for the same reason—he *needed* it! And when a man is truly "down and out" he naturally "setteth his heart upon it".

In Jas. 5:1-6 the wicked and oppressive rich are described as holding back the needed wages of the poor. Their wages were "kept back by fraud" and therefore "crieth out" against the hoarding masters. Jesus taught "the laborer is worthy of his hire," Luke 10:7. See also Matt. 10:10, I Tim. 5:18.

"The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor" (Prov. 29:7a).

### (13) TRANSGRESSORS TO BEAR OWN GUILT (24:16)

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:16

414. Is the case of Achan a violation of this law?
425. What about Korah and his company or the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanite tribes?
426. Read II Kings 14:1-6; Jer. 31:27-30 for a fulfillment of this law.
427. How does Deuteronomy 5:8-10 relate?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:16

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; only for his own sin shall anyone be put to death.

### COMMENT 24:16

God's law laid the punishment of death only upon the person or persons who had committed crimes worthy of death. The fathers, judges, or congregation had no right to punish any member of the family but the guilty party.

The case of Achan and his family (see especially Josh. 7:20-25)\* is sometimes cited as a "violation" of this law by God himself—as is also the punishment of Korah, his company, and their families (Num. 16:31-35) and the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanite tribes (Deut. 7:1-5, 20:16).

\*But were the other members of his family accomplices in the crimes? His "loot" was hidden in the family tent—it was not concealed from the eyes of wife and children!

But our present passage is not primarily a law regulating the dealings of *God*. Further, the cases cited above do not deal with God's *final* or *eternal* judgment (as administered by the Son, Jn. 5:22). Here, we have the judgments *Israel* was to make as a congregation—particularly through the priests and judges (13:6-11, 17:2-7, etc.) God *did* sometimes punish groups with death, whether directly or through human instrumentality. His reasons (as in the case of the Canaanites, above) are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

When Israel was a happy, prosperous, and obedient nation, this law was observed. Note II K. 14:1-6, Jer. 31:27-30. Vv. 31-34 of Jer. 31 have *special* reference to the situation under the New Covenant of Christ, Heb. 8:6-13.

But the principle of the passage before us also shall characterize God's final dealings with man, and the dealings of the righteous with their fellow-man. Note Ezek. 18 carefully. As in Jer. 31:29, 30, the proverb then in vogue about children suffering because of the parent's sin *is not upheld by the prophet of God*. Rather, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," and the righteous "shall surely live . . . the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." A careful study of Ezek. 18 and Jer. 31 will cause one to see the present passage in a larger context.

Israel knew the justice of this verse. That is why, under the yoke of Babylonian captivity, the cry is heard.

"Our fathers sinned, and we are not;  
And we have borne their iniquities"

—Lam. 5:7

Note also Deut. 5:8-10. The children would suffer punishment as a result of their parent's sin. But their personal guilt and destination is reckoned only from their own lives.

In the final day of reckoning, we have been assured of impartial and individual judgment, Matt. 16:27, Rom. 15:10-12, II Cor. 5:10, Eph. 5:7, 8, Col. 3:22—4:1, I Pet. 1:17.

#### (14) JUSTICE TO THE INDIGENT (24:17, 18)

17 Thou shalt not wrest the justice *due* to the sojourner, *or* to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge; 18 but thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:17, 18

428. Who was to enforce these various laws? Cf. 1:16, 17; 16:18-20.  
 429. Who would be classified as a "sojourner"? What justice was due him?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:17, 18

17 You shall not pervert justice due to the stranger or the sojourner or the fatherless, or take a widow's garments in pledge;

18 But you shall [earnestly] remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this:

## COMMENT 24:17, 18

The principles were to be observed by all, and enforced by the judges (1:16, 17; 16:18-20). As we saw above (vv. 10-13) a poor person often had only one or two garments—and the same garment often served as a nightgown and blanket. Thus the widow's was not to be taken as a pledge.

On v. 18, see also 10:17-19, Lev. 19:33, 34.

## (15) NEEDY TO BE CONSIDERED AT HARVEST TIME (24:19-22)

19 When thou reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. 20 When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the sojourners, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When thou gatherest *the grapes of* thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it after thee: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22 And thou shalt remember that thou was a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:19-22

430. Are some people "naturally" more generous than others? Is generosity a quality controlled by law?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:19-22

19 When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the

stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20 When you beat your olive tree, do not go over the boughs again; the leavings shall be for the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

22 You shall [earnestly] remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

### COMMENT 24:19-22

Compare 23:24-25, Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22. The poor and the sojourner were to be considered whether grain, olives, or grapes were being harvested. It is not difficult to see how the basic quality of *generosity* would be developed in the faithful Israelite who kept these laws.

### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

*The case of a divorced wife, 1-4. No man shall be obliged to undertake any public service for the first year of his marriage, 5. The mill-stones shall not be taken as a pledge, 6. The man-stealer shall be put to death, 7. Concerning cases of leprosy, 8, 9. Of receiving pledges, and returning those of the poor before bed-time, 10-13. Of servants and their hire, 14, 15. Parents and children shall not be put to death for each other, 16. Of humanity to the stranger, fatherless, widow, and bondman, 17, 18. Gleanings of the harvest, &c., to be left for the poor, stranger, widow, fatherless, &c., 19-22.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON EIGHTEEN (23:15—24:22)

#### CHAPTER 23

1. Note 23:15, 16. We have said this escaped slave was *not* an Israelite. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. It is a fact that prostitution and sodomy were frequently connected with heathen religious rites in ancient times. Do you know of modern examples of religion upholding or encouraging immoral practices?

## DEUTERONOMY

3. Why *not* bring the wages of a harlot into the house of God? Isn't money all the same? Do you think the church of the Lord should be supported by solicitations from non-Christians?
4. When loaning, whom could an Israelite charge interest? Whom could he not?
5. What was the rule concerning making and breaking vows?
6. If you ate grapes or plucked grain as you passed through your neighbor's field, what one cardinal rule was to be observed?

## CHAPTER 24

7. Upon what grounds could a man obtain a divorce under the Old Covenant?
8. Why did Jesus say this law was given?
9. Do you think it was practiced by Israelites before Deuteronomy was written?
10. What prohibition is laid down here for divorced persons?
11. How long was a newly married man exempt from military service? What reason is given for this?
12. How did the millstones involved in grinding grain represent "a man's life"?
13. What happened to an Israelite who kidnapped an Israelite?
14. Specifically, whose instructions were to be heeded by the leper?
15. Why should the leper remember Miriam?
16. How long could a creditor keep a poor man's pledged garment? Why?
17. When was a poor laborer to be paid? Why?
18. Note 24:16. This statement deals with Israel's judgment toward transgressors. How do you "reconcile" it with the judgment of *God* in 5:8-10?
19. Do you think 25:16 would aptly describe God's judgment in the final day? Scripture(s) please!
20. How would the poor be provided for as a generous Israelite harvested his crops?



## LESSON NINETEEN 25:1-16

### (16) JUDGING AND PUNISHING MEN IN CONTROVERSY (25:1-3)

If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, and *the judges* judge them: then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked; 2 and it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his wickedness, by number. 3 Forty stripes he may give him, he shall not exceed; lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:1-3

431. Was forty stripes given for every type of crime?
432. What was used for the administration of such punishment? Cf. Ex. 21:20.
433. By New Testament times the instrument for beating had changed. Cf. Matt. 10:17; 23:34.
434. In what sense was such punishment corrective?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:1-3

If there is a controversy between men, and they come into court, and the judges decide between them, justifying the innocent and condemning the guilty,

2 Then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a certain number of stripes, according to his offense.

3 Forty stripes may be given him, but not more; lest, if he should be beaten with many stripes your brother should [be treated like a beast and] seem low and worthless to you.

### COMMENT 25:1-3

See also 17:8-13, notes, 19:15-21. We have discussed the necessity of fair judgment on the part of the judges several times: 1:16, 17; 16:18-20; Cf. 24:17, 18.

The emphatic way in which the law stated that only forty stripes were to be given the offender, give rise to the custom of giving thirty-nine. A miscount might otherwise cause the offender to deem his persecutor as "vile," (Heb. *Kalab*) "to be counted despicable," (Gesenius). Yet by New Testament times the counting process had usually a simpler solution—less actual strokes by the one giving the lashes. See II Cor.

11:24, \*where Macknight remarks, "By the law, Deut. xxv. 3, punishment with stripes was restricted to forty at one beating. The whip with which these stripes were given [in Paul's day] consisting of three separate cords, and each stroke being counted as three stripes, beyond which they never went. Hence the expression, 'forty stripes save one.'" One more last would have meant forty-two stripes.

But the original law apparently referred to beating by a rod (Ex. 21:20). Scourging replaced it in later Jewish history (Matt. 10:17, 23:34) but the number of stripes was retained.

#### (17) OX TO WORK UNMUZZLED (25:4)

4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the grain*.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:4

435. Read I Cor. 9:9, 10 and I Tim. 5:17, 18 for a N. T. application of this principle. To whom does it refer in these two passages?
436. Why not muzzle the ox and feed him later?
437. How should we react to a comparison with an ox?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATIONS 25:4

4 You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain. [I Cor. 9:9, 10; I Tim. 5:17, 18.]

#### COMMENT 25:4

Paul uses the principle involved in this verse as applying to those who devote their lives to laboring in the work of Christ—I Cor. 9:9, 10! I Tim. 5:17, 18. If he is concerned about a brute beast enough to provide for his sustenance, is he not also desirous that those men who have devoted their lives to His 'harvest' (i.e. his *service*) also be sustained? And as the oxen partook of the very grain in which he worked, so it is right that God's laborers be sustained by the very persons with whom they work. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast" (Prov. 12:10)—How much *more* should he regard the life of his fellow-man, made in the image of God, and devoted wholly to his service.\*

\*If I may be allowed to draw out this parallel a bit, it is well to note that no "eating privileges" are mentioned here for lazy or non-working oxen! "The laborer is worthy of his hire" and "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (II Thes. 3:10). It is right and proper that *working* elders, ministers, or others set aside for the service of Christ be supported; it is also right and proper that they give themselves fully to their tasks (I Tim. 4:15, 16). The Church of our Lord has no room for mercenaries, hirelings or leeches!

## (18) THE FAMILY NAME: LEVIRATE MARRIAGE (25:5-10)

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. 6 And it shall be, that the first-born that she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead, that his name not be blotted out of Israel. 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother unto me. 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand, and say, I like not to take her; 9 then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house. 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:5-10

438. What of the preferences of the husband's wife? Is she not to be considered at all in the second marriage? Discuss.
439. Why would the brother of the deceased refuse to marry his brother's widow? Give two or three possible reasons.
440. What possible symbolic relation does the loosing of the shoe have with this transaction?
441. Why spit in the face?
442. Read Gen. 38:6-11 for the practice of this custom long before it was recorded as law.
443. Read also Ruth 4:7-13 and Matt. 22:23-33 for further examples.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:5-10

5 If brothers live together, and one of them dies and has no son, his wife shall not marry outside the family to a stranger [an excluded man]; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

6 And the first-born son shall succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name be not blotted out of Israel.

7 And if the man does not want to take his brothers' wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, My

husband's brother refuses to continue his brother's name 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; and if he stands firm and says, I do not want to take her.

9 Then shall his brother's wife come to him in the presence of the elders, and pull his shoe off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer, So shall it be done to that man who does not build up his brother's house.

10 And his family shall be called in Israel, The house of him whose shoe was loosed.

### COMMENT 25:5-10

Here we have the first time this instruction is *recorded as a law* in Israel. But it apparently had been a command of God for several centuries: Gen. 38:6-11. And it was still being practiced during Christ's ministry Matt. 22:23-33.

The law accords with the strong family ties in the Jewish economy, and the great reproach felt by them if no children were born to the marriage. As is so vividly described in the book of Ruth, the later custom in Israel was for another kinsman to assume this responsibility if it was refused by the brother or "near kinsman." Thus Boaz purchased (redeemed) this marriage right from Ruth's near kinsman (Ruth 4:7-13).

**LOOSE HIS SHOE** (v. 9)—Possibly symbolizing a releasing of his authority or rights over his brother's wife.

**SPIT IN HIS FACE** (v. 9)—An expression of utmost contempt, Num. 12:14, Job 17:6, 30:10. Insult is added to injury by the title with which he would be known (v. 10). By both means he would be publicly disgraced.

The design of this institution was obviously to preserve a family from becoming extinct and to secure the property of the family from passing on to a stranger.

### (19) PROTECTION FROM ANOTHER'S WIFE (25:11, 12)

11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets; 12 then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall have no pity.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:11, 12

444. How prudish to fail to translate a plain word meaning testicles! Why do this? What is wrong with facts?
445. Why such a stringent measure in this action?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:11, 12

11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband out of the hand of him who is beating him, and puts out her hand, and seizes the other man by the private parts;

12 Then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity her.

## COMMENT 25:11, 12

It was undoubtedly wrong for two Israelites to engage in fisticuffs as a means of settling a matter, but this did not justify either man's wife (apparently the one losing the fight) to use such a method of breaking it up. The man's very life and reproductive abilities were at stake.

## (20) JUST WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (25:13-16)

13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. 14 Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. 15 A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 16 For all that do such things, *even* all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:13-16

446. There seems to have been a bureau of weights and measures long ago. How was it determined if a weight was too great or small?
447. Proverbs has much to say about this. Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10; 23.
448. How does the length of Israel's stay in the land relate to honest business transactions?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:13-16

13 You shall not have in your bag true and false weights, a large and a small.

14 You shall not have in your house true and false measures, a large and a small.

15 But you shall have a perfect and just weight, and a perfect and just measure; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

16 For all who do such things, and all who do unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 25:13-16

See also Lev. 19:35-37, Micah 6:11. A number of Proverbs (11:1, 16:10, 20:10, 23) refer to the justice of this law—and the wickedness of being deceptive or deceitful in this all-important matter in the business world.

"They must not only not use them [diverse weights], but they must not have them; not have them in the bag, not have them in the house; for if they had them they would be strongly tempted to use them. They must not have a great weight and measure to buy by and a small one to sell by, for that was to cheat both ways, when either was bad enough; as we read of those that made the *ephah* small, in which they measured the corn [grain] they sold, and the *shekel* great, by which they weighed the money they received for it (Amos 8:5)." (Butler's *Bible Work*).

### QUESTIONS, LESSON NINETEEN (25:1-16)

1. What was the two-fold job of the judges?
2. If one deserved a beating, how many stripes?
3. Paul said he received *thirty-nine* stripes three times. Explain.
4. Give the two instances in which Paul uses v. 4. What was he trying to show in both cases?
5. Explain how the Levirate Law worked.
6. What "ritual" was to be performed if the husband's brother did not assume his responsibility in carrying it out?
7. What *purpose* did this law serve?
8. Diverse \_\_\_\_\_ were not to be in their bag; diverse \_\_\_\_\_ were not to be in their house.

## LESSON TWENTY 25:17—26:19

### n. LAWS OF NATIONAL IMPORT (25:17—26:19)

#### (1) THE PUNISHMENT OF AMALEK (25:17-19)

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; 18 how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:17-19

449. Read Exodus 17:8-16 and Numbers 14:42-45 for further information on the treatment of Amalek.
450. When was the sentence of Amalek executed?
451. How sad to consider what could have been. What was the one most minus quality in Israel's character?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:17-19

17 Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, when you had come forth from Egypt;

18 How he did not fear God, but when you were faint and weary he attacked you along the way and cut off all the stragglers in your rear. [Exod. 17:14.]

19 Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies round about, in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess for an inheritance, you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens; you must not forget it.

### COMMENT 25:17-19

REMEMBER WHAT AMALEK DID (v. 17)—See Ex. 17:8-16. Without any provocation whatever, they attacked Israel's rear as they were journeying through the wilderness, but were defeated by Joshua at Rephidim. They seemed to have attacked merely through hopes of plunder. Note also the encounter at Hormah (Num. 14:42-45) which ended in Israel's defeat.

Their manner of attack as described here, not only qualified them for immediate defeat; they must be *exterminated* as a tribe. And the prophecy of Balaam was,

"Amalek was the first of the nations;  
But his latter end shall come to destruction"  
(Num. 24:20).

His end, however, was not soon coming. The Amalekites were again and again thorns in Israel's flesh. Saul smote many of them (I Sam. 14:48, 15:7) as did David (I Sam. 27:8, II Sam. 8:11, 12). Finally, after the time of Hezekiah (I Chron. 4:43) they are not a tribe of consequence.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

*Punishment by whipping not to exceed forty stripes, 1-3. The ox that treads out the corn is not to be muzzled, 4. The ordinance concerning marrying the wife of the brother who has died childless, 5-10. Of the woman who acts indecently in succouring her husband, 11, 12. Of false weights and measures, 13-16. Amalek is to be destroyed, 17-19.*

### (2) OFFERING THE FIRST-FRUITS (26:1-11)

And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein, 2 that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shalt bring in from thy land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee; and thou shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 3 And thou shalt come unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the land which Jehovah sware unto our fathers to give us. 4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God. 5 And thou shalt answer and say before Jehovah thy God, a Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, we in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6 And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: 7 and we cried unto Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression; 8 and Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and



with signs, and with wonders; 9 and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me. And thou shalt set it down before Jehovah thy God, and worship before Jehovah thy God: 11 and thou shalt rejoice in all the good which Jehovah thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the sojourner that is in the midst of thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:1-11

452. For what purpose was the offering made?
453. Where and before whom was this offering made?
454. Is the offering here the same as what we also know as Pentecost? Cf. 16:9-12.
455. There appears to be an exchange between the priest and the worshipper. Approximate the part of each. This is a very impressive ceremony.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 26:1-11

When you have come into the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and live in it,

2 You shall take some of all the produce of the soil which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God gives you, and put it in a basket, and go to the place [the sanctuary] which the Lord your God has chosen as the abiding place of His name [and His presence].

3 And you shall go to the priest who is in office in those days, and say to him, I give thanks this day that I have come to the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us;

4 And the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God.

5 And you shall say before the Lord your God, A wandering and lost Aramean ready to perish was my father [Jacob], and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number, and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and numerous.

6 And the Egyptians treated us very badly, and afflicted us, and laid on us hard bondage.

7 And when we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our (cruel) oppression;

8 And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great (awesome) power, and with signs, and with wonders;

9 And He brought us into this place, and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 And now, behold, I bring the first fruits of the ground, which You, O Lord, have given me. And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God;

11 And you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you and your household, you and the Levite, and the stranger and the sojourner among you.

### COMMENT 26:1-11

See also 16:9-12 and notes. We have connected this ceremony to the *feast* of the first-fruits (Pentecost) as the two events must have come at approximately the same time.

The Israelite was to take a portion of these first fruits, and placing it in a basket, take it to the sanctuary, where it was to be received by "the priest that shall be in those days" (Probably not the high priest, but a priest whose function it was to officiate on such occasions, see 17:12). There, in a formal way, he was to say words to the effect "I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come (etc.);" The priest now setting the basket down before the altar, the offerer responds, "A Syrian ready to perish, etc." (vv. 5-9); concluding with the recognition and grateful acknowledgement that all the blessings he now enjoyed (after so humble an origin) were the result of God's mercy and goodness, (vv. 10, 11). Thus he was both rejoicing and giving thanks. The ceremony, when carried out as directed, must have been an impressive one.

A SYRIAN READY TO PERISH WAS MY FATHER (v. 5)—Jacob, their father, was in fact a Syrian—"a wandering Aramean" (Berkely)—for twenty years (Gen. 31:38, 41). "A wandering *and* lost Aramean ready to perish was my father Jacob" (Amplified O.T.). This was, specifically, the land of Paddan-aram or Mesopotamia. Thus, Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, was referred to as the "son of Bethuel the Syrian" (Aramean). And if these were humble origins for what was to become the great tribe of Israel, their sojourn into Egypt (vv. 5-8), while "few in number" (see Gen. 46:27) further demonstrated their lowly beginning.

## (3) TITHES OF THE THIRD YEAR (26:12-15)

12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithe of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then thou shalt give it unto the Levite, to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled. 13 And thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead: I have hearkened to the voice of Jehovah my God; I have done according to all that thou has commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the ground which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:12-15

- 456. Why call the third year "the year of tithing"?
- 457. Please notice those who were to benefit by the tithe. Who fits these categories now?
- 458. What is meant by the expression, "I have put away the hallowed things out of my house"?
- 459. Why would anyone be tempted to eat of the Lord's tithe during the time of mourning?
- 460. Explain: "given thereof for the dead."
- 461. God's blessing and approval is here directly related to the proper use of money. Is it yet true?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:12-15

12 When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce the third year, which is the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled,

13 Then you shall say before the Lord your God, I have brought the hallowed things [the tithe] out of my house, and moreover have given them to the Levite, to the stranger and the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me; I have not transgressed any of your commandments, neither have I forgotten them.

14 I have not eaten of the tithe in my mourning [making the tithe unclean], nor have I handled any of it when I was unclean, or given any of it to the dead; I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.

15 Look down from Your holy habitation, from Heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

### COMMENT 26:12-15

This passage is an expansion of the one formerly given in 14:28, 29. See notes there, and also on 14:22-27, all in lesson 12.

AND THOU SHALT SAY BEFORE JEHOVAH THY GOD (v. 13)—The head of the household makes a solemn declaration that he has discharged his tithing responsibilities faithfully and conscientiously. It may also have been made at the sanctuary before the priest (cf. v. 3, 5), though "before Jehovah" (v. 13) *may* also refer to what one does in his own house (Gen. 27:7).

I HAVE PUT AWAY THE HALLOWED THINGS OUT OF MY HOUSE (v. 13)—That is, the things which had been designated for God in the tithe had not been kept in his house. Jesus said "Rended . . . unto God the things that are God's"—a concept of both testaments.

Dr. Thomson\* gives us a helpful statement here. Remarking on v. 14 he says, ". . . this passage is made sufficiently plain by an acquaintance with modern [he wrote in the mid-nineteenth century] funeral customs. What you have just read is part of that protestation which the devout Jew was required to make at the close of the third year, 'which is the year of tithing.' He was to come before the Lord and say 'I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandments. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead.' This was the strongest possible protestation that he had dealt faithfully in the matter of tithing and consecrated things, and in charities to the poor. He had not allowed himself to divert anything to other uses, not even by the most pressing and unforeseen emergencies. It is here assumed, or rather implied, that times of mourning 'for the dead' were expensive, and also that the stern law of custom obliged the bereaved

\**The Land and the Book*, pp. 104, 105.

to defray those expenses, however onerous. The same thing lies at the basis of that excuse for not following our Saviour—"Suffer me first to go and bury my father;" a duty which must take precedence of all others. Such it was among most ancient nations, and such is the public sentiment at this day. Moreover, funerals are now ruinously expensive. Crowds of relatives, friends, and acquaintances assemble on these occasions. The largest gatherings ever seen in Lebanon are on these occasions. For all these guests refreshments must be provided, and not a few from a distance tarry all night, and must be entertained . . . In short, many families are reduced to poverty by funerals; and it must have been substantially so in remote ages, for the customs were similar. The temptation, therefore, to devote a part of the tithes, hallowed things, and charities, to defray these enormous, unforeseen, providential expenses, would be very urgent; and he who stood faithful at such times might be safely trusted on all other occasions . . . The words 'nor given ought thereof for the dead,' are explained by a curious custom still observed with great care. On certain days after the funeral, large quantities of corn [grain] and other food are cooked in a particular manner, and sent to all the friends, however numerous, in the name of the dead."

(4) CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO CARRY OUT COMMITMENTS  
TO GOD AND HIS LAW (26:16-19)

16 This day Jehovah thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched Jehovah this day to be thy God, and that thou wouldest walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and hearken unto his voice: 18 and Jehovah hath avouched thee this day to be a people for his own possession, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments; 19 and to make thee high above all nations that he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, as he hath spoken.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:16-19

462. What distinction (if any) is there between "heart" and "soul" as here used?
463. What is the meaning of the term "avouched"?
464. When we keep our promises Jehovah is ready to keep His promises. What are they?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 26:16-19

16 This day the Lord your God has commanded you to do these statutes and ordinances; therefore you shall keep and do them with all your [mind and] heart and with all your being.

17 You have (openly) declared the Lord this day to be your God, [pledging] to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His precepts, and to hearken to His voice.

18 And the Lord has declared this day that you are His peculiar people, as He promised you, and you are to keep His commandments;

19 And He will make you have above all nations which He has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and that you shall be a holy people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken.

## COMMENT 26:16-19

In v. 17 we have what *Israel* avouched (Heb. *amar*, Literally, be bright, make visible or known; hence to *declare*, as when a covenant is being made), and in vv. 18, 19, what *God* avouched. In *these* verses, the Israelite does not enumerate, one by one, the laws he will keep—he simply affirms openly that whatever God's will is concerning the matters mentioned, he will keep them.

AND TO MAKE THEE HIGH ABOVE ALL NATIONS etc. (note v. 19a), which the Torah renders "and that He will set you, in fame and renown and glory, high above all the nations that He had made . . ." while the margin of the A.S.V. reads, "for a praise, and for a name, and for an honor . . ."

However read, the meaning is apparent—obedient Israel would be greatly blessed.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

*First-fruits must be offered to God, 1, 2. The form of confession to be used on the occasion, 3-11. The third year's tithe to be given to the Levites and the poor, 12, and the form of confession to be used on this occasion, 13-15. The Israelites are to take Jehovah for their God, and to keep his testimonies, 16, 17. And Jehovah is to take them for his people, and make them high above all the nations of the earth, 18, 19.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY (25:17—26:19)

1. What had the Amelekites done to deserve extermination?
2. At what *two* places had they attacked Israel? What was the outcome in the first? Second?
3. Was the commandment to "blot out their remembrance" carried out?
4. Give the gist of the declaration to be made at the presentation of the first-fruits.
5. How could an *Israelite* say, "A Syrian ready to perish," or "a wandering Aramean" was my father?
6. For whom were the tithes of the third year intended?
7. Note v. 14 and comment on the declaration this tither made. What does he mean by these statements?
8. Basically, what did God "avouch" in the last part of this lesson?

## LESSON TWENTY-ONE 27:1—28:68

### III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE

Future of Israel Foretold (27:1—30:20)

#### A. ALTAR TO BE BUILT UPON MOUNT EBAL FOR THE RECORDING OF GOD'S LAW

(27:1-8)

And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandment which I command you this day. 2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over the Jordan unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up **great** stones, and plaster them with plaster: 3 and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over; that thou mayest go in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee. 4 And it shall be, when ye are passed over the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. 5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto Jehovah thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt lift up no iron *tool* upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of Jehovah thy God of unhewn stones; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto Jehovah thy God: 7 and thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God. 8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:1-8

465. Read Joshua 8:30-35 for fulfillment of the promises made here.
466. What was to be written upon the stones? How much of the law? How large were the stones?
467. Was the altar the same as the stones upon which was written the laws of Jehovah? Cf. Joshua 8:31, 32.
468. What specific purpose or purposes were served in fulfilling these instructions?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:1-8

And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, Keep all the commandments with which I charge you today.



2 And on the day when you pass over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall set up great stones, and cover them with plaster.

3 And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have passed over, that you may go into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you.

4 And when you have gone over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, on Mount Ebal, and coat them with plaster.

5 And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not lift up any iron tool upon them.

6 You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of whole stones, and offer burnt offerings on it to Him;

7 And you shall offer peace offerings, and eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God.

8 And you shall write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

### COMMENT 27:1-8

See also Josh. 8:30-35 where we have these instructions carried out.

SET THEM UP GREAT STONES (v. 2)—These were to be unhewn stones, v. 5, Ex. 20:25. Hewn and engraved stones were associated with idolatry. Thus graven images were forbidden, v. 15, 4:16ff. Recall Aaron in making the golden calf "fashioned it with a graving tool" (Ex. 32:4). The whole stones would contrast to the idolator's hewn and graven ones. Compare memorials set up in the Jordan (Josh. 4:8, 9), and Gilgal (Josh. 4:20). Perhaps for this (as well as other reasons), no iron tool was used on the temple premises (I K. 6:7).

PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER (v. 2)—Some believe the Hebrew is better read, *cement them with cement*. Smith has "white washing them with lime". But regardless of the mixture used, its purpose is apparent: to serve as a binder and provide a relatively smooth surface for writing (we suppose before it hardened).

WRITE UPON THEM ALL THE WORDS OF THE LAW (v. 3)—Are *all the words of Moses* meant? The laws of the book meant? The laws of the book of Deuteronomy just given? Surely not the entire Penta-

teuch! Nor is there any valid reason for supposing only the decalogue to be meant. Clarke suggests that "the (. . . *Torah*) law or ordinance in question simply means the *blessings* and *curses* mentioned in this and the following chapter; and indeed these contained a very good epitome of the whole law in all its promises and threatenings, in reference to the whole of its grand moral design."

But it seems difficult to understand "all the words of this law" (v. 3, 8) as not referring to a legal code. And in view of the ability of the Hebrew language to say much in a few words, we would tend to believe that at least the *legislative* portion of Deuteronomy—"this law" is meant. It may have been condensed or abbreviated. Note especially Josh. 8:32, where it is called "a copy of the law of Moses," which is distinguished from "the book of the law of Moses," (v. 31). As we are not told the size of the monument, no problem exists concerning making it *large* enough for a lengthy inscription.

IN MOUNT EBAL (v. 4)—On the side of this mount the stones were to be set up. It was the mountain of curses, 3,075 feet, and stood to the north and directly opposite mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessings, 2,850 feet. Between them lay a vale, and the town of Shechem—a city of ancient origin (Gen. 12:6, 33:18), before which lay a relatively wide plain.

AND THERE SHALT THOU BUILD AN ALTAR (v. 5)—Not a different structure from the memorial, but the same one, Josh. 8:31, 32.

## B. CURSES TO BE REPEATED FROM MT. EBAL (27:9-26)

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Keep silence, and hearken, O Israel: This day thou art become the people of Jehovah thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:9, 10

469. In what sense was Israel becoming a people of Jehovah? Why were they not before this time?
470. Is there some distinction between commandments and statutes?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:9, 10

9 And Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day you have become the people of the Lord your God.

10 So you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and do His commandments and statutes, which I command you today.

## COMMENT 27:9, 10

THIS DAY THOU ART BECOME THE PEOPLE OF JEHOVAH (v. 9)—The normal sense of "this day" in Deuteronomy is "at this time" (26:16-18). But in a very wondrous and real way, the *could* then say they were "the people of God"—a *nation*, a country, and they had finally arrived at their home! The impressive ceremony of Josh. 8:30-35 must certainly also have been a very emotion-filled one, as Israel officially "claimed" the land.

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 And the Levites shall answer, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:11-14

471. Why the choice of the tribes to bless?  
472. What impression was this whole ceremony to make upon Israel?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:11-14

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

12 These [tribes] shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph's [sons], and Benjamin.

13 And these [tribes] shall stand upon Mount Ebal to pronounce the curse [for disobedience]: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites shall declare with a loud voice to all the men of Israel:

## COMMENT 27:11-14

On the sides of these two mountains the people were to be placed, half on one and half on the other, while in the vale between (with Shechem to one side) stood the ark, with the Levites. Those who stood on Gerizim responded to the blessings, those on Ebal to the cursings, as these were spoken "with a loud voice" by the Levites. (Apparently the acoustics were good—Jotham later spoke to all Shechem by standing "on the top of mount Gerizim," Jud. 9:7.\* See also 11:26-32.

Adam Clarke, following Dr. Parry, positions the tribes of Israel as follows:

NORTH EBAL	<i>Strangers</i> Naphthali Dan Zebulun Asher Gad Reuben <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS	EAST		SOUTH GERIZIM
		<i>Blessings</i>	<i>Cursings</i>	
		ALTAR		
		ARK		
		WEST		
				<i>Strangers</i> Benjamin Joseph Issachar Judah Levi Simeon <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS

According to the Talmud, six tribes went up towards the top of Gerizim and six towards the top of Ebal. The priests and Levites stood beneath the two with the ark. They then turned their faces towards Mount Gerizim and pronounced the blessings (see ch. 28). To this

\*"In consequence of the dispute which arose over the marriage of Manasseh, who belonged to the high-priestly family, with a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 13:28), a temple was built on Gerizim as a rival to that in Jerusalem (c 432 B.C.)," (I.S.B.E.). This was the beginning of the schism between Jew and Samaritan which lasts to the present day. According to Josephus, however, Sanballat, with the sanction of Alexander the Great, built a temple for the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim, of which Manasseh became high priest. At any rate, by the time of Jesus the Samaritan woman could very truthfully say, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" (Jn. 4:20). Jacob, a common ancestor of both nations (Jn. 4:12), worshipped either on or near it, Gen. 33:20.

both sides responded with "Amen!" As the scripture reads, however, the "Amen" was to come after each curse.

15 Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination unto Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he that wresteth the justice *due* to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife, because he hath uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:15-26

473. Try to imagine the great attraction of idolatry. There must have been some rationalization, attempt to express it.
474. What is meant by the use of the word "light" as used in vs. 16?
475. Are we to believe a man could be put to death for changing a property line?
476. Why would anyone be so cruel as to mislead a blind man?
477. Kindness and generosity was a very prominent part of Israel's morality. Why?

478. Why mention "his father's skirt" in the case of adultery with the wife of the father?
479. Was morality so lax in Israel, or was there some other reason for these regulations?
480. What is involved in the word "confirmeth" in vs. 26?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:15-26

15 Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. All the people shall answer, Amen.

16 Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother. All the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he who moves (back) his neighbor's landmark. All the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he who misleads a blind man from his way. All the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner or the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. All the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he uncovers what belongs to his father. All the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he who lies with any beast. All the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he who lies with his half-sister, whether his father's or his mother's daughter. All the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law. All the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he who slays his neighbor secretly. All the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person. All the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he who does not support and give assent to the words of this law to do them [as the rule of his life]. All the people shall say, Amen.

### COMMENT 27:15-26

It is quickly seen that most of these curses have been discussed in previous chapters.

GRAVEN OR MOLTEN IMAGE (v. 15)—See 4:15-19, notes, 5:8-10.

AND SETTETH IT UP IN SECRET (v. 15)—Lest his fellow-Israelite or leaders discover his sin. (Like Rachel, who hid the teraphim under the camel's saddle without even her *husband's* knowledge, Gen. 31:32-35). But "the eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). He "seeth under the whole heaven" (Job 28:24). Cf. II Chron. 16:9, Prov. 5:21.

HE THAT SETTETH LIGHT BY HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER (v. 16)—"he who is making light of his father and his mother" (Young's Literal); "he who dishonors his father or his mother" (R.S.V.); "he who insults his father or mother" (Torah). "Setteth light by" is a rendering of the Heb. verb *Kalah*, which Baumgartner's Lexicon defines as "treat with contempt." See Lev. 20:9, Ezek. 22:7, and our previous discussion under Deut. 21:18-21.

HE THAT REMOVETH HIS NEIGHBOR'S LANDMARK (v. 17)—See 19:14, notes.

THAT MAKETH THE BLIND TO WANDER (v. 18)—See also Lev. 19:14. It is difficult to conceive of one so inhumane as to mistreat or deceive the blind, but in our own generation we have witnessed such in the sadistic and cruel treatment of elderly men and women who are robbed, abused or beaten on the streets.

JUSTICE DUE THE SOJOURNER, FATHERLESS, AND WIDOW (v. 19)—Cf. 1:16-18, 10:17, 18; 16:19, 24:17, 18, notes: Ex. 22:21-24.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS FATHER'S WIFE (v. 20)—See 22:30, notes.

HE THAT LIETH WITH ANY MANNER OF BEAST (v. 21)—See 23:18, notes. Cf. Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS SISTER (v. 22)—This curse applies to half sisters as well as full sisters. See Lev. 18:6-18, esp. v. 9. Also Lev. 20:17.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW (v. 23)—See also Lev. 20:14. A careful reading of Leviticus, chapters 18 and 20, will show how God abhorred *any* kind of incest, adultery, or fornication, under the Mosaic code. And surely this fact is clear from the many condemnations of these sins we have found in *this* book.

HE THAT SMITETH HIS NEIGHBOR IN SECRET (v. 24)—See 4:41-43 and especially 19:1-13, notes. The reference *here* is obviously to premeditated murder.

HE THAT TAKETH A BRIBE TO SLAY AN INNOCENT PERSON (v. 25)—Compare 10:17-19, 16:18-20; 25:1; Ex. 23:1-3, 6-8.

CURSED BE HE THAT CONFIRMETH NOT THE WORDS OF THIS LAW TO DO THEM (v. 26)—Compare 26:16-19. Again and again the necessity of *doing* the words of the law is emphasized. This was a prerequisite of God's fullest blessing. But this very truth pointed up the need of a Redeemer. The fact that *no* one (save the Lord Jesus) kept the law completely and perfectly, meant that the law itself served as their condemning agent. Thus Paul affirms, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us . . ." See Gal. 3:9-14.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

*Moses commands the people to write the law upon stones, when they shall come to the promised land, 1-3. And to set up these stones on Mount Ebal, 4; and to build an altar of unbewn stones, and to offer on it burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, 5-7. The words to be written plainly, and the people to be exhorted to obedience, 8-10. The six tribes which should stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, 11, 12. Those who are to stand upon Mount Ebal to curse the transgressors, 13. The different transgressors against whom the curses are to be denounced, 14-26.*

### C. BLESSINGS TO BE REPEATED FROM MOUNT GERIZIM (28:1-14)

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: 2 and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 5 Blessed shall be thy



basket and thy kneading-trough, 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

7 Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. 8 Jehovah will command the blessings upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto; and he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 9 Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*, 14 and shalt not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:1-14

481. What specifically is promised in the expression: "Set thee on high above all the nations of the earth"? "On high" in what respect?
482. What is a synonym for the word "Blessed"? As used in vs. 3, 4, 5.
483. What would cause the enemies of Israel to flee before them? The fierceness of Israel's appearance? The military ability of Israel or what?
484. Itemize the relationships of Jehovah to Israel if they were obedient.
485. List the specific promises, material and Spiritual, promised by God to Israel.
486. God assumes faith and demands what?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:1-14

If you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth,

2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you heed the voice of the Lord your God.

3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.

4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock.

5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

7 The Lord shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways.

8 The Lord shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouse, and in all that you undertake; and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

9 The Lord will establish you as a people holy to Himself, as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and walk in His ways.

10 And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name [and in the presence of] the Lord; and they shall be afraid of you.

11 And the Lord shall make you have a surplus of prosperity, through the fruit of your body, of your livestock, and of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The Lord shall open to you His good treasury, the heavens to give the rain of your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

13 And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and are watchful to do them.

14 And you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

## COMMENT 28:1-14

The blessings here recounted are *not* those that God sends "on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). They are the blessings promised

to an *obedient Israel*, and withheld if they are disobedient as in 7:12-26, Lev. 26:3-13.

THY BASKET AND THY KNEADING-TROUGH (v. 5)—a rendering to be preferred over the A.V., "thy basket and thy store," as also in v. 17. Both when they *gathered* produce (grain) would they be blessed, and when they proceeded to *use* it by baking, would God be with them.

The basket (Heb. *tene*) was large and deep, and in it grain or other products of the field were carried home and kept. Cf. 26:2 ff. They were variously made of willow branches, palm leaves, or rushes.

COME OUT AGAINST THEE ONE WAY, AND SHALL FLEE SEVEN WAYS (v. 7)—Indicating the utter confusion and consternation of a routed enemy. Note v. 25 where *Israel* is described as fleeing in the same way. The simple promise of God was *victory* over the enemy with obedience, *defeat* with disobedience. And the defeat is described as being just as cataclysmic as the victory would be glorious.

AND ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH SHALL SEE (v. 10)—Note the two blessings promised here: 1. Foreign nations shall see Israel's greatness as coming from Jehovah God, and that his name is held high in the land. 2. They shall fear Israel. Cf. 2:25, 11:25.

JEHOVAH WILL OPEN UNTO THEE HIS GOOD TREASURE THE HEAVENS, TO GIVE THE RAIN OF THY LAND IN ITS SEASON (v. 12)—The early and latter rains (See 11:11-17, notes), were the very "life of the land" in Israel. Every kind of blessing was dependent upon their regular appearance. Without them, the land very literally became cursed. See v. 24 of this chapter. Because the manna also came from above (Ps. 78:23, 24), and because godly people of all ages have known that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (Jas. 1:17)," many blessings are included when God speaks of opening up the windows of heaven (II K. 7:2, 19, Mal. 3:9-12), although this expression originally had specific reference to rain (Gen. 7:11). So here God's "treasure the heavens" is specifically rain, but because a million blessings followed a well-watered Palestine, the "treasure" included much more than *water*!

THOU SHALT LEND TO MANY NATIONS . . . NOT BORROW (v. 12)—See 23:19, 20, note.

Before you leave this section, reread vv. 1-14 and note the "ifs". All the promised blessings were Israel's to have and enjoy *IF* . . .

## D. FEARFUL CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE FORETOLD (28:15-68)

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:15-19

487. What is the meaning of the word "cursed" as here used?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:15-19

15 But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you:

16 Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field.

17 Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

18 Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, of your land, of the increase of your cattle and the young of your sheep.

19 Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

### COMMENT 28:15-19

These verses stand in obvious contrast to those blessings just promised to the obedient nation. Contrast v. 17 with v. 5, v. 18 with v. 4, v. 19 with v. 6. See Lev. 26:15 ff.

20 Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 Jehovah will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it. 22 Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with

## CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE 28:15-24

fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24 Jehovah will make the rain of thy land power and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:20-24

488. Jehovah was going to interfere and interrupt the daily life of the people of Israel. Does He have less interest in His people today?
489. List the influences of God as to: (1) work, (2) sickness, (3) weather, (4) politics.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:20-24

20 The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one].

21 The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from off the land, which you go to possess.

22 The Lord will smite you with consumption, with fever, and inflammation, fiery heat, sword and drought, blasting, and mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

23 The heavens over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron.

24 The Lord shall make the rain of your land powered soil and dust; from the heavens it shall come down upon you until you are destroyed.

## COMMENT 28:20-24

Now, and increasingly as we proceed in this chapter, the curses take on the form of a concrete *prophecy*. And although in several cases we can see *many* instances of fulfillment, in others we can be more concrete and specific.

The Amplified O.T. renders v. 20 well: "The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one]."

UNTIL THOU BE DESTROYED (v. 20. Cf. v. 48)—"destroy" is the English rendering of a number of different Hebrew words—in the Old Testament, in this book, and in this chapter! Normally, *utter* destruction is not meant unless that is the translation—(as the Heb. word *charam* is rendered in 2:34, 3:6 [twice], etc.) The Hebrew word used here (*shamad*) is, indeed, also sometimes rendered "utterly destroy," but the idea is not the annihilation or total extinction of the Hebrew peoples from the face of the earth. This truth is well illustrated in 4:25-31, where "utterly destroy" is used synonymously with "scatter you among the peoples." With reference to Israel, (as is seen below) the term simply has reference to a nation *cursed of God*—unproductive, unhappy, and ruled by a foreign power. So in v. 33 we are told they shall be "only oppressed and crushed away"—Not quite rooted out as the Canaanites and Amalakites were, and of which no traces now remain.

PESTILENCE (v. 21)—Heb. *deber*, "bobopest, plague" (Baumgartner).

FIERY HEAT (v. 22)—Is this a reference to the weather conditions of the land, or an individual's state of fever? Gesenius defines the Heb. word (*charchur*) "inflammation, burning, fever." The LXX has *erethismos*, irritation.

THE SWORD (v. 22)—this is the normal rendering of the Heb. *chereb*. However, some manuscripts, because of a different pointing of the Hebrew consonants, have *choreb*, drought, waste. This reading is found in the Samaritan text, and is rendered similarly in the Vulgate, Arabic, and most of the modern versions.

HEAVEN . . . SHALL BE BRASS . . . EARTH THAT IS UNDER THEE SHALL BE IRON (v. 23)—i.e., the heavens would not bring forth rain (Contrast v. 12) and the earth would be sterile and unproductive. (Remember too that dry ground tends to *harden* and does not respond readily to cultivation.) See Lev. 26:19, 20.

JEHOVAH WILL MAKE . . . DUST (v. 24)—Contrast again with v. 12. As the *rain* was formerly given in response to their righteousness, so God also can be the source of powder and dust (or sand)—which of course may also move through the sky carried by the winds. "The allusion is probably to those clouds of dust and sand which often fill the air in Palestine, when the heat is intense and there has been no rain for a vehement sirocco, and the air is filled with sand and dust, and is like the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace."\*

\*The quote is from Pulpit Commentary. But see also the vivid description of this wind and dust in Thomson's *Land and the Book*, pp. 295, 536, 537.

25 Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before thee: and thou shalt be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away. 27 Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28 Jehovah will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart; 29 and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee. 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit thereof. 31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to save thee. 32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people; and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day: and there shall be nought in the power of thy hand. 33 The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway; 34 so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35 Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:25-35

490. Consider the map as to the location of Israel. How would the geographical location of Israel relate to the promise, "tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms"?
491. List the personal bodily afflictions here promised. When were these promises fulfilled?
492. List the domestic tragedies.
493. Where and when and by whom were these words first fulfilled? With what result?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:25-35

25 The Lord shall cause you to be struck down before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and you shall be tossed to and fro and be a terror among all the kingdoms of the earth. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:8.]

26 And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.

27 The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with the tumors, the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed.

28 The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and dismay of [mind and] heart.

29 And you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to save you.

30 You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, and not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard and not gather its grapes.

31 Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away before your face, and not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to help you.

32 Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day, and there shall be no power in your hands to prevent it. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:9.]

33 A nation which you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your land and of all your labors; and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. ]Fulfilled, Judg. 6:1-6; 13:1.[

34 So that you shall be driven mad by the sight which your eyes shall see.

35 The Lord will smite you on the knees and on the legs and a sore boil that cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

## COMMENT 28:25-35

AND THOU SHALT BE TOSSED TO AND FRO AMONG THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH\* (v. 25)—“a ball for all the kingdoms to play with” (Shultz). If any nation on earth has fulfilled these words, Israel has.

\*A number of modern translators have rendered this phrase “a horrible spectacle to all the kingdoms of the earth” or similarly.



She has been a literal "football" for centuries. Perhaps that period of history immediately after the conquest of Alexander the Great best illustrates these verses. Palestine then lay between the kingdom of the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucidae in Syria. These royal families and their kingdoms were constantly at one another's throats, and Israel became a literal battlefield for their wars—Sometimes held by one power, sometimes by the other. (How ridiculous, then, the later defense of the Jews—"We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any man" (Jn. 8:33))!

BOIL OF EGYPT (v. 27)—The A.V. has *botch of Egypt*. Compare also v. 35, 60, Ex. 9:9, 10, though these may not all refer to the same affliction. Whatever kind of boil or inflammation it was, it is hard to imagine one that was pleasant!

EMEROLDS (v. 27)—Heb. *ophel*, probably hemorrhoids or piles.

MADNESS, BLINDNESS, etc. (v. 28)—Note how these diseases are either of the head or mental, while the previous ones were basically bodily afflictions.

MADNESS (v. 28)—Heb. *shiggaan*, a form of which also appears in v. 34. Baumgartner says it is derived from an Arabic word which was used of the continuous cooing of a male pigeon, (apparently one in *distress*). But the Hebrew word always refers to a distressed *individual*, a madman.

BETROTH A WIFE . . . ANOTHER SHALL LIE WITH HER (v. 30)—This, as well as other statements in vv. 29, 30, show the unstable and insecure social conditions that would exist in Israel—especially an Israel continually threatened, invaded, or dominated by heathen nations. Law, order, morality, respect for the rights of others, respect for private property—these are lacking when evil dominates, for "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:35).

36 Jehovah will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation that thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worm shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy borders, but thou shalt

not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *its fruit*. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess. 43 The sojourner that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. 45 And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:36-46

494. Consider the chronology involved in verse 36. How many years for the conquest? How many years in the period of Judges? How long before the nation of Israel was taken into captivity?
495. Which captivity is prophesied here?
496. We should learn the oft repeated lesson: what is so many times referred to as "good luck" is actually God's blessing; what is called "bad luck" is God's chastizement.
497. Read Jer. 16:13; 44:17-19 for one fulfillment.
498. There is a contrast in verses 15 and verses 43 and 44. What is it?
499. According to verse 46 what was to be a sign to the nation of Israel?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:36-46

36 The Lord shall bring you and your king whom you have set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone. [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 17:4, 6; 24:12, 14; 25:7, 11; Dan. 6:11, 12.]

37 And you shall become an amazement, a proverb, and a byword, among all peoples to which the Lord will lead you.

38 You shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. [Fulfilled, Hag. 1:6.]

39 You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall eat them.

40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olive trees shall drop their fruit.

41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but shall not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. [Fulfilled, Lam. 1:5.]

42 All your trees and the fruit of your ground shall the locust possess. [Fulfilled, Joel 1:4.]

43 The transient (stranger) among you shall mount up higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.

44 He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45 All these curses shall come upon you and shall pursue you and overtake you, till you are destroyed, because you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you;

46 They shall be upon you for a sign [of warning to other nations] and for a wonder, and upon your descendants for ever.

### COMMENT 28:36-46

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN, THOU NOR THY FATHERS; AND THERE SHALT THOU SERVE OTHER GODS, WOOD AND STONE (v. 36)—What nation in history that has conquered and carried away Israel, best fits this prophecy? But before we proceed further, we must ask the question, Is God always referring to the *same nation* in this chapter, or are his words at times *general* in scope, with perhaps a *number* of specific fulfillments? We must *immediately* answer that the last statement is at least *true so far as history is concerned*: history will show a *number* of nations that meet the requirements of *most* of these scriptures, such as Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece and Rome. And who is to say these nations were not instruments in the hand of God. (Dan. 4:31, 32, 35; Jer. 1:10, 18:5-9)? Some are overwhelmingly convinced that the Babylonian seige and captivity, and that *only*, was in the mind of God throughout these verses. We could not deny this in such verses as 36, but in vv. 49, 52, and 53 the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions so perfectly fits the description that it surely can be called *one* fulfillment of the prophecy. And this writer would be hard pressed to deny the claim of one who argued that the atrocities and wholesale murders of the Jews by the Germans before and during World War II was another fulfillment of several statements in Deut. 28. The atrocities were cruel, inhuman, and malicious on the part of the Germans, but *so are those described here!*

As a *general* rule we may say that vv. 36-46 better describe the Babylonian siege and captivity, and vv. 47-57 the Roman. Compare this first section with 4:25-31 and note the promise of returning to their *homeland* when they returned to *God*. This, of course, was especially true of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.

Since 1948 Israel, as a result of the Zionist movement, has again been officially recognized as a nation. In the summer of 1967 they won an important victory over the Arabs, regaining the Arab sector of Jerusalem and other important territory to the south. But what of Israel's future? As long as she continues to reject the *Messiah* her prosperity can only be temporary.

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN (v. 36)—with reference to the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah said, "therefore will I [God] cast you forth out of this land into the land that ye have not known, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night . . ." (Jer. 16:13). "The Hebrew exiles, with some honourable exceptions, were seduced or compelled into idolatry in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities (Jeremiah 44:17-19). Thus, the sin to which they had too often betrayed a perverse fondness, a deep-rooted propensity, became their punishment and their misery" (J.F.B.).

The nation described in v. 49, on the other hand, was not only "from far," but had a language foreign to the Hebrews. Compare Dan. 3:6, 7. Babylon would fulfill the "not known" requirement, but their language was a kindred one to the Hebrews'. See v. 49.

Note here too that Israel's *king* was to be taken in this captivity—which was true of the *Chaldean* conquest, not the Roman.

THEY SHALL GO INTO CAPTIVITY (v. 41)—True of the Northern ten tribes to some degree (II K. 17:6, 18:11, 12) but more literally fulfilled when Jerusalem was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar, II K. 24:14, 25:11, II Chron. 36:20, Jer. 22:24-28. Henry Cooke (N.S.I.B.L.) adds, "Besides the captivities recorded in the Old Testament, the destruction of Jerusalem after [during] the Christian era was accompanied by the captivity of many thousands of all ages and sexes, and their exposure to sale and slavery."

THE SOJOURNER THAT IS IN THE MIDST OF THEE SHALL MOUNT UP HIGHER AND HIGHER (v. 43)—Especially well illustrated in the case of the Assyrian infiltration, then domination, of the ten northern tribes (II K. 15:19, 29, 17:1-6). Perhaps the Seleucid domination even better depicts this description. The conquests of Alexander the great

of Macedonia, at least as far as its immediate effect, was benign, in that it relieved the Jews of the galling yoke of the Persians. But upon Alexander's death Palestine became part of one of the five divisions of the empire. Ruled from Syria by the hated Seleucid dynasty even into Roman times, the Jews finally revolted under the leadership of the Macabees in 166 B.C.

HE SHALL LEND TO THEE (v. 44)—Contrast v. 12, 15:6. And remember that borrowing often inferred subjection, Prov. 22:7.

AND THEY SHALL BE, etc. (v. 46)—a better rendering is, "They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time." (The Torah)

47 Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; 48 therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, 51 and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be destroyed; that also shall not leave thee grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of thy cattle, or the young of thy flock, until they have caused thee to perish. 52 And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. 54 The man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children whom he hath remaining; 55 so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward

her daughter, 57 and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:47-57

500. Joyfulness and gladness are an essential ingredient for acceptableness with Jehovah; Why?
501. Who put a yoke of iron upon the neck of Israel?
502. Note the three characteristics of the nation brought in by God to oppress Israel.
503. Notice the progressive nature of the siege; list the steps.
504. War makes animals of men. Why?
505. Is there no one who will remain true to his standards of ethics regardless of circumstances? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:47-57

47 Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness of [mind and] heart [in gratitude] for the abundance of all [with which He had blessed you],

48 Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until He has destroyed you.

49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you shall not understand;

50 A nation of unyielding countenance, who will not regard the person of the old, or show favor to the young.

51 And shall eat the fruit of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; who also shall not leave you grain, new wine, oil, the increase of your cattle or the young of your sheep until they have caused you to perish.

52 They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.

53 And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege

and in the (pressing) misery with which your enemies shall distress you, [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 6:24-29.]

54 The man who is most tender among you, and extremely particular and well-bred, his eye shall be cruel and grudging of food toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward those of his children still remaining;

55 So that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children which he is eating, because he has nothing left him in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you in all your towns.

56 The most tender and daintily bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so dainty and kind, will grudge to the husband of her bosom, to her son, and to her daughter,

57 Her afterbirth that comes out from her body and the children whom she shall bear; for she will eat them secretly for want of all else in the siege and distress with which your enemies shall distress you in your towns.

### COMMENT 28:47-57

These verses, while in certain instances aptly describing the Babylonian and other invaders and their treatment of Israel, are especially descriptive of the Roman siege of Judea and Jerusalem. In 66 A.D. the Jews openly rebelled against the Roman rule and violence, and gained control of Jerusalem. Rome's first counter was to send, late in the summer of 66 A.D. 40,000 soldiers from Antioch under the Roman legate in Syria, Cestius Gallus. But he was thoroughly routed by the Jews in and around Jerusalem, and retreated minus 6,000 of his men. Word of Gallus' sorry failure was hurried to Rome, and Nero now chose his greatest general, Titus Flavius Vespasian, to put Palestine, and Jerusalem particularly, into its proper place. By the spring of 67 A.D. he had 50,000 troops massed at Ptolemais on the coast north of Mount Carmel. Bit by bit, he successfully crushed opposition in the areas of Samaria, Peraea, and Idumaea. But in June of 68 Nero died and Vespasian himself was placed upon the throne. The Jewish war was abandoned for almost two years. Finally, in the spring of 70, another sizeable Roman army was organized, this time at Caesarea, and its command entrusted to the emperor's own son, Titus. Many of the statements of this chapter describe his conquest of Jerusalem as perfectly as if it was written some 1500 years later.

BECAUSE THOU SERVEST NOT, etc. Read v. 47 slowly and carefully through again, and note v. 48 begins "THEREFORE . . ." Here is the verse upon which all the prophecies of doom in this entire chapter are pedicated! Israel did not serve Jehovah with a full, rich, glad heart EVEN THOUGH HE BLESSED THEM WITH "THE ABUNDANCE OF ALL THINGS!" Therefore they would get a "WANT OF ALL THINGS" (v. 48). Oh that this passage could be burned into the heart and emblazoned across the consciousness of every professing Christian! If such heartfelt and joyous service was part and parcel with a faithful keeping of the Mosaic law, how much *more* our devotion to *Christ* and our faithful service to *Him*! As we saw so plainly in 6:4 ff., the *law* demanded more than mechanical, perfunctory, stoical observance of precepts. If it was so then, how much more now, when under the gospel everything is dependent upon our right relationship with that One who promised "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it?"

Never—never in the history of the world has God accepted service to Him that was not earnest, sincere, and spontaneous. He never will. And here the rebuke is levelled at a nation who failed to give God such service in spite of prosperity and plenty from his very hand. Frequently they "feared Jehovah, and served their own gods," and "did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah" (See II K. 17).

AND HE SHALL PUT A YOKE OF IRON UPON THY NECK, UNTIL HE HAVE DESTROYED THEE (v. 48)—See our previous discussion of "destroy," v. 20. The Babylonian domination and captivity was called an "iron yoke" (Jer. 28:13, 14). And that captivity may be symbolized here. But, as a good many expositors have pointed out, iron was symbolic of the rule of Rome, who employed that metal in their armies far more than any previous nation. Daniel used the metal to symbolize this empire, Dan. 2:40-43, 7:7.

A NATION AGAINST THEE FROM FAR, FROM THE END OF THE EARTH, AS THE EAGLE FLIETH; A NATION WHOSE TONGUE THOU SHALT NOT UNDERSTAND (v. 49)—This particular verse would appear to rule out the Babylonians, for their language, at least at the time of their conquest of Judah (586 B.C.) had marked similarities to the Hebrew. Probably because of the widespread migrations of the Aramaeans, by the year 1000 B.C. Aramaic was spoken extensively in the land of Babylon. This language became somewhat of a *lingua franca* (hybrid language) of the whole Tigris-Euphrates valley. Thus Senna-



cherib, king of Assyria, could communicate (through Rabshakeh) to the leaders of Israel "in the Syrian language (*literally, Aramean*), II K. 18:26, though at that time *most* Israelites could not understand it (Isa. 36:11). And Artaxerxes, king of Persia, received a communication from the enemies of Israel in the same language, Ezra 4:7. The Hebrews also used Aramaic increasingly after the exile, and in all probability learned it in Babylon. Daniel and his friends, for example, were taught "the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 1:4), and the Syrian language was in vogue (2:4). "Aramaic is like Hebrew and Arayan, a North Semitic tongue, standing in a manner between them . . . before the reign of Tiglath-pileser Aramaic was the general speech for commerce and diplomacy all over S.W. Asia . . . generally understood from Asia Minor on the north to the Cataracts of the Nile on the south, and from the mountains of Media on the east to the Mediterranean on the west" (I.S.B.E.).

Thus we look for an invader outside the Near East for this prophecy's fulfillment. Rome, whose capital was some 1500 miles from Jerusalem as the crow flies certainly qualifies as one "from far, from the end of the earth". And her Latin languages, so totally different from the Hebrew, certainly was "a tongue thou shalt not understand." A Hebrew could no more understand Latin than an American can understand Chinese.

AS THE EAGLE FLIETH (v. 49)—"as swift as the eagle flies" (R.S.V.) or "swooping down upon you like an eagle".\* The Roman standard was an eagle, which has been called "the appropriate emblem of their soaring pride, their far-sighted cupidity, their swift descent, and their insatiable rapacity" (Cooke, N.S.I.B.L.).

A NATION OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE (v. 50)—The verses to follow illustrate this truth. The conquering nation then, is to be distinguished by three characteristics:

1. It was to come "from far, from the end of the earth".
2. Its language was to be one not understood by Israel.
3. It was to be unmerciful and ruthless to all classes of persons.

Such were the Romans, whose devastating conquests were to come a millenium and a half after these utterances;

\*Some render the Heb. word *Nesher*, ("a tearer with the beak") *vulture*. But the context of the most passages where the word occurs almost demand "eagle": II Sam. 1:23, Prov. 30:19, Isa. 40:31, Obad. 4. It should also be mentioned that the flight and ways of the eagle are also used to describe Babylon's conquest, Isa. 8:8.

AND THOU SHALT EAT THE FRUIT OF THINE OWN BODY (v. 53)—See also Lev. 26:27-29, II K. 6:29, also Jer. 19:9, where the Babylonian siege is referred to. Such atrocities describe conditions of great famine, or a people who are being starved out by the enemy. See II K. 6:24-29, describing conditions as Ben-hadad of Syria besieged Samaria (Israel). Also, in anticipation of the Babylonian siege, see Lam. 2:20, 4:10. Starving people are *desperate* people! Josephus, describing the Roman siege, tells how parents seized morsels of food from their children (though they were perishing) and how old men who held on to their food were beaten. ". . . and if women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor."\*

He later describes a starving woman who slew and roasted her own son, a babe still sucking at her breast. ". . . she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed."\*\*

AND THE MAN THAT IS TENDER AMONG YOU, AND VERY DELICATE, HIS EYE SHALL BE EVIL (v. 54) . . . THE TENDER AND DELICATE WOMAN (v. 56)—War and starvation will turn them into ravenous animals—though they normally be refined and reserved. In the case cited above, for example, Josephus reports that the woman, upon being discovered by a group of fellow-Jews, said, ". . . Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman or more compassionate than a mother . . ."

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD; 59 then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which thou was afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Jehovah bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 63 And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah rejoiced over you to do you

\*Wars of the Jews, Book V Ch. X, #3.

\*\*Ibid, Book VI, Ch. III, #4.

good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 64 And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would it were morning; for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And Jehovah will bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:58-68

506. How is the word "fearful" in verse 58? How is the word "wonderful" used in verse 59?
507. Please remember there are two sides of God's character: wrath and love. Israel was promised in great detail both the benefits of His love and the punishment of His wrath. Who was responsible for what they received?
508. When was the promise of verse 64 fulfilled?
509. Israel's second bondage in Egypt was to be worse than their first bondage. How so?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:58-68

58 If you will not be watchful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may (reverently) fear this glorious and fearful name [and presence], THE LORD YOUR GOD;

59 Then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary strokes and blows, great plagues of long continuance, and grievous sickness of long duration.

60 Moreover He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.

61 Also every sickness and every affliction which is not written in the book of this law, the Lord will bring upon you, until you are destroyed.

62 And you shall be \*left few in number, whereas you had been as the stars of the heavens for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

63 And as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice to bring ruin upon you and to destroy you; and you shall be \*\*plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64 And the Lord shall scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither your nor your fathers have known. [Fulfilled, Dan. 3:6.]

65 And among these nations you shall find no ease and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot; but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart, failing of eyes [from disappointment of hope], fainting of mind and languishing of spirit.

66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you; day and night you shall be worried, and have no assurance of your life.

67 In the morning you shall say, Would it were evening! and at evening you shall say, Would it were morning! because of the anxiety and dread of your [mind and] heart, and the sights which you shall see with your [own] eyes.

68 And the Lord shall \*\*\* bring you into Egypt again with ships, by the way about which I said to you, You shall never see it again; and

\*The informed reader scarcely needs to be reminded of how literally fulfilled have been many of these predictions of evil made against the chosen people because of their idolatry and rebellion against God. Such verses as 25, 32, 33, 36, 38, 41, 42, and 53, foretell historical facts now recorded in Jewish history both sacred and secular. Here verse 62 foretells how the Jewish race "has been thinned, and kept down, again and again."

\*\*[The Roman Emperor] Hadrian issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*).

\*\*\*"Observe the contrast, you came out from bondage by God's high hand, monuments of His grace and power; you shall be carried back into bondage in men's slave-ships. This was literally fulfilled under [the Roman emperor] Titus, and also under Hadrian" (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*). The curses . . . were also fulfilled in a terrible manner during the middle ages, and are still in a course of fulfillment, though frequently less sensibly felt (*Lange's Commentary*). "Here, then, are prophecies delivered above 3,000 years ago, and yet being fulfilled in the world at this very time . . . I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression; they are truly as Moses foretold (vs. 45, 46) they would be, 'a sign and a wonder for ever'" (Bishop Newton, quoted in *Jamieson, Faussett and Brown Commentary*).

there you shall be sold to your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you. [Hos. 8:13.]

## COMMENT 28:58-68

The prophecy now once again takes on a more general character, as in vv. 20-35.

ALL THE DISEASES OF EGYPT WHICH THOU WAST AFRAID OF (v. 60)—How many and what kind these were, we can only guess—But doubtless an oppressed and abused slave people had their share. Cf. v. 27, 7:14, 15; Ex. 15:25, 26.

ALSO EVERY SICKNESS, AND EVERY PLAGUE, WHICH IS NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK (v. 61)—In other words, diseases and afflictions of every description and of every kind will be the lot of a disobedient Israel.

v. 63—A better rendering perhaps is, ". . . as it was agreeable to the Lord to make you prosper and multiply, so it will be agreeable to the Lord to make you perish, and He will glory in your destruction . . ." God's glory, greatness, and dignity shall remain, regardless of the response men make to his divine will. But he takes no delight in the punishing of the wicked (Ezek. 18:21-32, I Tim. 2:3, 4, II Pet. 3:9).

YE SHALL BE PLUCKED FROM OFF THE LAND (v. 63)—See Jer. 12:14, where the Babylonian attack is again anticipated. Note II K. 24:10-14, 15:11, 12. The phrase also describes conditions following the Roman devastation: "Hadrain issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines" (Gray and Adams).

SCATTER THEE AMONG ALL PEOPLES (v. 64)—What peoples in *all history* have been more completely dispersed throughout the world? And they certainly have not always kept their national religion, even in the modernized form gaining ascendancy with Jews in this country. But the immediate reference here appears to be further back in Israel's history.

JEHOVAH WILL BRING THEE INTO EGYPT AGAIN WITH SHIPS, BY THE WAY WHEREOF I SAID UNTO THEE, THOU SHALT SEE IT NO MORE AGAIN (v. 68—See also Jer. 4:11-14, 26-28, Hos. 8:13, 9:3, 11:5. Josephus speaks of Titus, after the Roman victory, reserving the stronger and abler ones of the city for the triumphal march, and killing

the aged and infirm. ". . . and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines."\*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

*The blessings which God pronounces on the obedient, 1-6. Particular privileges which the faithful shall receive, 7-13. The curses pronounced against the ungodly and idolatrous, 14-19. A detailed account of the miseries which should be inflicted on them, should they neglect the commandments of the Lord, 20. They shall be smitten with the pestilence, 21; with consumption, fever, &c., 22; drought and barrenness, 23, 24; they shall be defeated by their enemies, 25, 26; they shall be afflicted with the botch of Egypt, 27; with madness and blindness, 28, 29; they shall be disappointed in all their projects, 30; deprived of all their possessions, and afflicted in all their members, 31-35; they and their king shall go into captivity, 36, and become a by-word among the nations, 37. Their land shall be unfruitful, and they shall be the lowest of all people, 38-44. All these curses shall come on them should they be disobedient, 45-48. Character of the people by whom they should be subdued, 49, 50. Particulars of their dreadful sufferings, 51-57. A recapitulation of their wretchedness, 58-63. The prediction that they shall be scattered among all the nations of the earth, 64-68.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY ONE (27:1—28:68)

### OVER CHAPTER 27

1. Describe the monument to be set up on mount Ebal, including as many details as possible.
2. Why no iron tools used in its construction?
3. What purpose(s) did it serve?
4. There is a "common denominator" in the origin of *most* of those tribes receiving the curse, and again among *most* of those receiving the blessing. What is it in each case?
5. Describe the setting of this event: Where are Ebal and Gerizim? What lay between them? How were the people arranged? Where were the Levites? What did they do?
6. How did the idolator cursed in the verses "set up shop"?
7. Who is one that "setteth light by" his father or mother?
8. The final curse of Cha. 27 is rather all-inclusive. Do you remember it.

\*Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. IX, # 2.

OVER CHAPTER 28

9. What is the blessing of "thy basket" (v. 5)?
10. What are two effects Israel's righteousness and prosperity would have on the surrounding nations?
11. What is heavenly treasure, specifically and generally?
12. Israel is to "be destroyed . . . perish . . . crushed away . . ." In view of the fact that there are many Jewish people in the world today, did this prophecy fail?
13. What is signified by a brass sky? Iron earth? (v. 23)
14. Israel was to be "tossed to and from among all the kingdoms of the earth" (v. 25). Cite at least three obvious ancient examples and one modern one.
15. Can you recall three indications of the unstable and dangerous conditions which would exist in an Israel oppressed by a foreign power?
16. As a general rule, we may say vv. 36-46 best describe the \_\_\_\_\_ conquest, vv. 47-57 best describe the \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Why say "as a general rule"?
18. Which nation(s) best fits the phrase, "whose tongue thou shalt not understand," and why *not* Babylon?
19. Recall several phrases or statements of this chapter that describe a *desperate* and starving people.
20. What is "this glorious and fearful name"?
21. What country's diseases will afflict them?
22. How many other plagues and sicknesses?
23. How extensively would Israel be scattered?
24. Unto what country would they return which they had previously left, and by what means?