

## 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 testicales! 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.