



Deuteronomy 23-25

Tape #7059
Deuteronomy 23-25
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn to Deuteronomy, chapter twenty three. Under the Old Testament economy, the closer you came to God, the more exclusive was the group, that could come. As a Gentile, you would be excluded, period. They had in the temple, the outer court, which was the court of the Gentiles. They had signs along the fences warning any Gentile, that if he would come beyond that point, it would mean death. A Gentile could not approach the altar of God.

Then there was the next court, which was the court of the women. Where if they had gone through the various rituals, they could come to worship the Lord. Then within that was the court of the men. The congregation of the Lord. But the congregation of the Lord was also quite exclusive. You had to go through purification rites and so forth before you could enter the congregation of the Lord.

You remember when Paul the apostle, had return to Jerusalem with the offering from the Gentiles, those in the church said, "Hey Paul, the Jews around here really have it in for you. They've heard how you've been preaching to the Gentiles. They don't go for that, so why don't you just play it cool. Let's not create any problems while you're here. We're living pretty peacefully with these fellas, so if you'll just go through the purification rites. Show them you're a good Jewish boy, and you're not here to stir up any trouble, then you know, things will be calm". So Paul was going through the purification rites so that he could participate in the worship at that particular feast. You remember he kept saying, "I want to get back to Jerusalem before the feast".

Now, we're talking about congregating before the Lord, on the feast days. The three days of the year, when the adult males presented themselves to God. To be among that group, that presented themselves before God, you had to go through the various offerings, and there were various requirements. Now, beyond that, you entered into the holy place, and that was exclusive for just those in the priesthood. Unless you were of the tribe of Levi, and you were an ordained priest, you could not enter into the holy place, and then entering into the holy of holies, the presence of God, you had to be the high priest, and you could only enter that one day out of the year. So the closer you got to God, the more exclusive became the entrance.

You remember Paul the apostle, in writing to the Ephesians, talks about how Jesus broke down the wall of partition that separated us. That wall that was in the outer court, that warned the Gentiles, "Don't come close. Don't come over beyond this sign, or you'll be put to death". Jesus tore down that wall that separated us from God. But here under the law, we are talking about those who could come into the congregation of the Lord.

Those who could present themselves to God would be males, the men, at these three festivals. Now, there were people that were excluded, even if you were a Jew and had done all the right things. There were exclusions. In chapter twenty three he deals with some of those exclusions.

Those who are emasculated, [That is, incapable of producing children] either by the crushing or mutilation [You've been castrated.] you shall not enter the congregation of the Lord: [So that was a prohibition.] One of illegitimate birth, shall not enter the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation, or none of his descendants shall enter the congregation of the Lord. An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants shall enter the congregation of the Lord forever (23:1-3):

The tenth generation is a term, ten being a symbolically a number of indefiniteness. So, it really is, when it says the tenth generation, it's just saying forever. The reason why the Ammonites and the Moabites were prohibited is...

They did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt; and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia (23:4).

Someone asked me when we were studying Balaam, where'd I get he came from Mesopotamia, well, I got it from the bible, here in the twenty third chapter of Deuteronomy.

Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; he was hired to curse you, but God wouldn't listen to Balaam; but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you (23:5).

How many times in scripture have we seen God turn the curses of man into blessing? When the brothers of the Joseph sold him as a slave and he was carried off to Egypt. Later on when Joseph faced his brothers again, and he was in the point of advantage, he was now second to Pharaoh. When they realized that this fellow was Joseph, the one that they had so viciously betrayed, they were afraid. Joseph said, "Hey, don't be afraid. I don't intend you any harm. I know that you intended what you did to me for evil. You intended that to be evil, but God intended it for good". God took the curse and made it into a blessing. God so often does that.

People sometimes worry about people putting a hex on them or a curse on them, or whatever. But the scripture says, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, this is a heritage of the children of the Lord". When they asked Balaam to curse these people, he said, "Hey there's no divination or enchantment that I can work against these people, because they are blessed of God". It is wonderful to know, that when God's blessing is upon our life, though people may hate us and curse us, and seek to curse us, that a curse uncaused, shall not come to pass.

Now Balaam counseled the king how to bring a curse, but they caused the curse themselves. He could not curse them, but he did lead them into a position that brought a curse upon them. But God did not listen to Balaam, but He turned the curse into a blessing. Balaam tried to curse them, and instead he blessed Jacob, because the Lord your God loves you.

Oh if you only knew how much God loved you! If you only knew how much God prizes you. If you only knew how much God cherishes you. Paul the apostle, when he was praying for the Ephesians, prayed, "That they might know what is the exceeding richness of His inheritance in the saints". If you only knew how much God treasures you! Now it's hard for us to really grasp. That God should treasure me. What is there in me, what do I have that God should value me, or treasure me? I can't answer that, because I don't know. All I know is that He does treasure me. I am His special treasure, and I'm thankful for it! I don't really press the point, I don't argue it much, I just enjoy it, you know why mess with a good thing?

Now they're not to seek the peace of the Ammonites or the Moabites forever, don't seek their peace or prosperity all the days for ever. You shall not though, abhor the Edomite; for he is your brother: [He of course, is a descendant of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. Now the Edomites were just as mean as were the Moabites, as far as their coming out to stop them from coming through the land, yet because of the relationship, they're not to be abhorred.] You're not to abhor the Egyptian; because you actually dwelled in his land for four hundred years you were an alien there. So the children of the third generation born to them, may enter the congregation of the Lord (23:6-8).

So, three generations down. God now requires cleanliness. In these particular laws, are sanitary laws.

So when an army goes out against your enemies, keep yourselves from every wicked thing. If there is a man among you who becomes unclean during the evening, he's to go outside the camp, and he's not to come inside until the following evening, when he has washed himself with water: and the sun is set. If you need to relieve yourself, you're to go outside of the camp, you're to carry a shovel with you, and you're to cover your refuse: For the Lord your God walks in the midst of the camp. [So the sanitary laws, the cleanliness that they were to observe.] You shall not give back to his master, the slave who has escaped from his master (23:9-15):

Now God is giving leniency. Now that is not so among the nations around about them. A slave would run away from his master, would have under the Roman empire, a brand put on his forehead. "F", for fugitives. If he was caught running away, he was killed. But not so. They were to harbor the slave that was able to escape.

He may dwell in your midst, in the place where he chooses: within one of your gates,, you're not to

oppress him. There shall be no ritual harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel (23:16-17).

That is a female or male prostitute, for religious purposes. Ritual prostitutes, or ritual harlots. In most of the pagan religions, because of the capacity of man to reproduce this wonder, this marvel of reproduction, was something that was considered sacred. Much of the worship of the pagan religion centered around the reproductive capacities. So they actually had rituals, sexual rituals in which they honored the reproductive capacities. Many of the pagan temples were supported by the temple prostitutes. Even in the time of Greece, those who were serving in the temple of Aphrodite, were actually temple prostitutes. So, they were not to allow any of their children to become involved in ritual prostitution.

Nor are you to bring the hire of a prostitute, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord your God, for any vowed offering: [Now you say, "The price of a dog, well what's that got to do with it. You know, if I sell a dog, you mean I can't tithe on that?"] no the dog here is a male prostitute. It's the translation of the Hebrew word, male prostitute. So you're not to bring the price of a female or male prostitute into the house of God for any vowed offering.] for these are an abomination unto the Lord your God. You're not to charge interest to your brother; on any money, or food, or any thing that you have lent to them: Now if they're a foreigner or a stranger, then collect interest from them. When you make a vow to the Lord, you shall not delay to pay it: for the Lord your God will surely require it of you; and it will be a sin to you. But if you abstain from vowing, it is not a sin to you (23:17-22).

So, better really not to vow. God doesn't require you to make any vows. Usually we make vows in order to induce God to do something for us. "God if you'll do this for me, this is what I'm gonna do for you." And a vow is made unto the Lord in order to get some favor from God, so often. Now, a vow isn't necessary. God said, "If you don't make any vows, there's no sin to it". God doesn't require you to make a vow.

What God gives to us, He gives to us on the basis of His grace. God doesn't give to you because you deserve it, because you're worthy of it, because you've been so good. We've got to somehow alienate ourselves from that deeply inbred concept! We have this reward concept so ingrained, that we are prone to think that when things are going bad that, "God is punishing me", and when things are going good, "God is blessing me". And that the blessings of God are because I've been faithful, or I've been good, or I've been, you know, doing a little extra, so God is rewarding me. No the blessings of God upon my life come purely from God's grace. I don't deserve the blessings of God. They're undeserved. That's great! So I don't have to promise God that I'll do certain things for Him, in order that God might do something for me. But if I do make that kind of a promise, then I'm to keep it. God requires it of me, if I make that kind of a vow.

That which is gone from your lips you shall keep and perform; for your [voluntary vowed, uh,] voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth (23:23).

Now of course we remember under the law, if a woman made a vow, the father, if she wasn't married, the father could disallow the vow. "Oh no, no, doesn't go". Or if his wife made a vow, he could say, "Nope", and he could cancel his wife's vows. If he didn't cancel them they held. But this is talking about the men making their vows. "You have made a vow voluntarily, now you're to keep it."

When you come to your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure; but don't put any in a container. [Don't carry any out, go ahead and eat all you want while you're there, but you're not to carry any out.] When you come into your neighbor's standing grain; you may pluck it with your hands, but don't put a sickle to it (23:24-25).

So again, necessity, hunger. You could go into a vineyard and eat the grapes, you could go into a field and eat the grain, but you're not to carry any away.

Chapter 24

Then in chapter twenty four you have laws that concern divorce.

If a man takes a wife, and marries her, and it happens that she has found no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her: he writes her a certificate of divorce, and puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (24:1).

Boy look at that! Women had very little rights and you remember under the Hebrew economy, they have more than the pagan societies around them. But if a man found an uncleanness in his wife, all he had to do is write her a bill of divorcement, "I divorce you", and hand it to her, and she had to leave the house. He didn't have to leave, she had to leave. No recourse.

That's why they had dowries. Dowries was alimony in advance. It was a wise program for the wives who had no rights, or a wife who was not protected really, in marriage. All her husband had to do was say, "I divorce you", hand her the paper, or write it, "I divorce you", hand her the paper, and she was out. So they would have dowries, before you get married. You know, "I want so many camels, and so many sheep, for my daughter, and that way in case you ever put her out, then I have enough...", and it was the father's responsibility to take care of that dowry. To invest it, use it, multiply it, so that he always had a nest egg for his daughter, should she ever be put out. It was a wise contingency for the women who had very little rights under the laws.

The interpretation of the word uncleanness. It was a word that was subject to interpretation, and among the Jews there developed two, sort of fields of thought, coming from two different Rabbis. There was a Rabbi Hillel, who had a very liberal interpretation of the word uncleanness. That is, anything that you are not happy with. You woke up in the morning, and saw her with curlers, and without makeup. "That's not what I married, I divorce you!" Hallel had a very liberal interpretation of the word uncleanness. Anything that brought disfavor. Found out she couldn't cook. There was another Rabbi Shammai, Shammai, S-h-a-m-m-a-i. He interpreted the word uncleanness to mean, a sexual impurity. You've discovered that she wasn't a virgin, or that there was some sexual impurity, then you could divorce her. But only for some sexual impurity, adultery, or the fact that she wasn't a virgin.

These two fields of thinking dominated the whole Jewish thought in this law. The two fields of interpretation. That is why, when they came to Jesus, they wanted to see which side He was on. They said, "Can a man put away his wife without any cause? Do you agree with Hallel, or do you agree with Shammai?". Turned out that Jesus agreed with Shammai. "When a man puts away his wife, and marries another, except it be for fornication, he causes her to commit adultery. Whoever marries her commits adultery." "How then did Moses give us a law that he should give her a writing of divorcement?" Jesus said, "Because of the hardness of your hearts. But from the beginning it wasn't so, in the beginning God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his mother and father, cleave to his wife, and the two of them would become one flesh. Therefore those who God has joined together, let no man put asunder". So the law concerning divorce, it was very liberal in some areas of thought and more stringent in others. But here is when he hands her the writing of divorcement, sends her out of his house.

When she is departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife. If the latter husband detests her, and writes her a bill of divorce, and puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife; Then the former husband, who divorced her, must not take her back, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord: and you shall not bring sin upon the land, which the Lord your God has given you as an inheritance (24:2-4).

So once divorced, you could not, if she had married another man, in the meantime, you could not then take her back, at a later time, as your wife. This was under the law. It was to keep order.

Now when a man has taken a new wife, he is relieved from a lot of responsibilities for a year: he can't be charged to go to war, he's not to engage in business, he's to be free at home for a whole year. [Quite a honeymoon!] to bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken. [So there were some good things in this law, and considerations.] No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in a pledge: for he takes one's living in pledge (24:5-6).

Now the pledge of course, you borrow money from a person and you have to give them collateral, the pledge that you're gonna pay back the money. Well one thing that could not be used as a pledge was a millstone, and neither the grinding stone beneath, neither the upper stone, the millstone that rolls around on the grinding stone. Because that's a person's livelihood. You're not to take a person's livelihood for a pledge.

If a man is found kidnaping any of his brothers of the children of Israel, and he mistreats him or

sells him; the kidnapper shall die; you shall put away that evil person from among you. Be careful if there's an outbreak of leprosy, diligently observe the law that God had given concerning leprosy to the Levites: be careful to do it. Remember even Miriam, the sister of Moses, how the Lord God ordered her out of the camp, even though she was cured of the leprosy for seven days. When you lend your brother any thing, you shall not go into his house to get the pledge (24:7-10).

You're not to barge into his house, and say, "Well I'll take this until you pay me back!"

Stand outside, and let him bring the pledge out to you. And if the man is poor, you're not even to keep his pledge overnight (24:11).

Now the pledge was usually a garment, "Here, take my coat", but don't keep it overnight, because the poor people use their coat as a blanket, it served as their blanket. They didn't have blankets, they just wrapped themselves up in their outer court, coat. Usually they would take their coat off to go to work. But then they'd put the thing on for warmth at night. They didn't have lovely air-conditioned homes, and furnaces like you have. So, their outer coat was their blanket.

So in any case you're to return the pledge to him when the sun goes down, that he might sleep in his own garment, and bless you (24:13):

If he's there shivering all night he might be saying, "Oh that cursed guy", you know and it'd be all night long, praying curses and vengeance upon you because he can't sleep. He's too cold. So you want him to be warm, and you want him to say, "Ah that wonderful person gave me my coat back".

You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brothers, of or the aliens who is in the land within your gates: [No oppression of the servant.] Each day you shall give him his wages, [You're not to withhold his wages.] but daily they're to be paid, but don't let the sun go down on it; for he is poor, he has set his heart upon the wages: lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be a sin unto you. The fathers are not to be put to death for their children, [Now that was often a practice in the pagan society around them, if a man did a sin, they would execute the whole family. Now under the law here, they're not to do that. It was a common practice in the ancient world, but God forbids it.] a person dies for his own sin: the father shouldn't die for the child's sin: nor the child for the father's: every man for his own. You shall not pervert justice that is due to the stranger, or the fatherless; nor take a widow's garment as a pledge (24:14-17).

In other words just because a person doesn't have any other defense, you don't take advantage of it. He's a, an orphan or whatever, and you're to see that he gets his just due.

Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord redeemed you from there: therefore I command you to do this thing. When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forget your sheaf in the field, you are not to go back to get it: you are to leave it for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord your God may bless you and the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, [That is to get the olives down. They go around with a stick and they beat the trees, and the ripe olives fall.] you're not to go over the boughs the second time: you're to leave the olives for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you're not to glean it afterwards: it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (24:18-21).

Now, this was the welfare program. Under the law, it was amplified even a little further. When you're going through with a sickle to cut the wheat or the barley, you weren't even allowed a second swack at it. If you didn't get it good with the first swack, you had to just let it alone! If while you were gathering it, you dropped some on the ground, you were forbidden to pick it up. You had to let it lie there. The poor of the ground, the poor of the land, would go in, and follow then your harvesters, and they would collect, they called it the gleaning, they would glean and pick up the residue. Thus they were provided for by the residue that was left. You had one chance to pick your fruit. Whatever was green at the time of picking, you had to leave. Whatever was green of the grapes, you had to leave, leave it for the poor, they come along later and they can gather it. Thus the poor were taken care of.

I find that to be a very excellent law. I think it's much better than plowing it in, like we do today. I think it would be a great welfare program, if the, those involved in agriculture, rather than plowing in the cabbage, and you know, the oranges and everything else, I think it would be great to just allow the poor the

land. To go and help themselves! Once they've gone through and picked the crop, just leave the rest of it for the poor people to come along and to pick up.

Remember that you were once a slave in Egypt: you were once poor, therefore I command you to do this thing (24:22).

So it's God's, God's taking care of the poor people. An interesting, I'm sure you've noticed, all through the bible, God has a tremendous interest in the poor people. God is quite concerned about the poor. He's always seeking to protect the poor.

Chapter 25

Now if there's a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge; and they justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. Then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down [in the presence] in his presence, according to his guilt, by a certain number of blows. But forty blows he may give him, and not to exceed that (25:1-3):

So usually the beatings were with a stick, and they were allowed to beat them forty times. They could not exceed forty. Now, it got to where they would beat them thirty nine times. There's a couple of fields of thought in that. Number one, they wanted to be careful that they didn't exceed, so stop one short. That way, if you lose count along the way, you won't exceed what the law has declared that you can do. The second interpretation, is that they often used a whip that had three thongs on it, so that each time you whipped him, it counted for three, because it had three stripes on the thing. So you get to thirty nine, you're in the multiple of three, if you go beyond thirty nine, you go to forty two, and so you can't, so the thirty nine was the common number for the beatings. Of course, you remember, that when Jesus was scourged, thirty nine stripes. So it was, it was, it had become quite a common practice in the administering of this particular law to beat them thirty nine times.

You are not to muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain (25:4).

Now an interesting law that Paul picks up in the new testament, and he uses it to apply to the ministers. That is that, "A person who is laboring, is to receive from his own labors", and Paul was talking about how they should support those that minister to them, in that you're not to muzzle the ox, while it treads out the grain. Now an ox that is working and used, being used to tread the grain, was not to be muzzled. He could eat the grain as he was treading. That's the whole idea. He's working, he's laboring, and thus he's allowed to eat it. He's not to be muzzled. Interesting law here. A couple of these laws here, in fact the law concerning the reaping, that we had at the end of the last chapter, and this law. You'll want to remember these when we get to the book of Ruth. Because they become very prominent and interesting, as you see the application in the book of Ruth.

If brothers dwell together, one of them dies, and he has not son, the widow of the dead man shall [be married] not be married to a stranger outside of the family: her husband's brother, shall go in to her, take her as his wife,, and perform the duty of the husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the first born son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel (25:5-6).

So the thought of the perpetuating of a man's name. If he married a woman died, before he had any children, then it was the obligation and responsibility of his brother to go in and to have a child, and name the child after the dead brother, to keep his name alive in Israel.

But if the man doesn't want to marry her, if he doesn't want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him: and if he stands firm, and says, I don't want to take her; Then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, and remove his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face, and she shall say to him, So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother house. [And he gets a dirty name.] And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him who had his sandal removed (25:7-10).

Or the man from who the shoe was loosed. An interesting law. Now this actually was a custom long before the law. Back in the book of Genesis, you remember Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, gave his first

born son unto Tamar. He died without any children, and so Onan, the brother, went into Tamar, but he refused to raise up a child for his dead brother, and so the Lord killed Onan. Now Judah had lost two sons on this gal already, and he was reluctant to give the third son. So he passed off the excuse, he said, "Well the third was too young. Wait till he grows up, you know wait till he's a man", and then he can do it. But he was really just hesitant. So when the third son grew up, he still hadn't bothered to do anything about it.

But it was a custom of the land before it became a law. It became incorporated in the law, but there was within the law, the out. I think that's only fair, that a guy not be forced, if he really doesn't want to take the woman, there wouldn't be any love involved, and it'd be a miserable relationship. So I think it's right that there is an out to it.

Two men fighting together, and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband from the one who is attacking him, if she puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals: Then you shall cut off her hand, you eye shall not pity her. You're not to have in your bag differing weights, a heavy one and a light. [A heavy one to buy and a light one to sell. It was, you know everything was done with balances so, quite often they had different weights.] You're not to have in your house different measures, a large and a small (25:11-14).

In the United States, for years we did have what was known as the National Standard of, the National Standard Bureau of Weights and Measures, and this was a bureaucracy that was established by the government. They would go around, and they would, the gasoline pumps, they would pump out a gallon of gas, and make sure that it was a gallon. They had weights that they would put on the scales at the market, and then they would put their seal, and some of you can't remember this. This was back a few years, and some of you weren't around when there was a National Standard of Weights and Measures, but it was a bureau of the United States Government, to make sure that a pound was a pound, a gallon was a gallon, a pint was a pint. It was all, imagine the chaos as far as merchandising, if you didn't have standardized weights and measures.

In England, a farmer was brought to court by the baker, who purchased his butter from the farmer. The baker complained to the Judge, that when the farmer first started dealing with him, he gave him a full pound of butter. But it had cut down and cut down, until now, the farmer was only giving him ten ounces of butter, and charging him for a pound. He brought him to court. The farmer, in his defense, said, "Judge, Your Honor, the only scale I have is a balanced scale, and so I take his pound loaf of bread, and put it on one side, and I measure out the butter on the other".

Important that we have standardized weights and measures. So that is what the law is requiring here. Not two, two pound rocks, one, a light one, one, a heavy one. One that when a person wants to come and sell you something, you put the heavy one on. Then when you go to sell it, you put the light one on. It's the put your thumb on the scale kind of a thing. I mean it's, stay away from that.

You shall have perfect and just weights, and perfect and just measures: that your days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord your God has given you. For all who do such things, and all who do unrighteously, are an abomination (25:15-16).

God wants honesty, God wants, now what's wrong with God's laws? Pray tell? They're fair. God wants you to be fair in your dealings with your fellow man. God wants you to be honest! God wants you to be upright! God doesn't want you taking advantage. God wants you to treat the other person right, to treat them fairly. I'm sure that as we look at that, we say, "Well yeah that's right, I agree with that, we should". But do we? Now the Lord says...

Remember Amalek what he did to you on the way, as you were coming out of Egypt (25:17);

Amalek, when the children of Israel were coming out of Egypt, in their journey through the wilderness of Rephidim, just after they had experienced a marvelous miracle of water out of the rock, as they were turning on towards Sinai, Amalek attacked the rear, the stragglers, the older people. Those sickly, weak ones who couldn't keep up the pace with the rest of the camp, sort of straggling behind. And Amalek in a sneaky attack, treacherous attack, attacked the rear of Israel. So Moses told Joshua, "Get some chosen men, go down and fight them". As long as Moses lifted up his hands, the children of Israel prevailed. They were watching from the hilltop, when Moses' hands were weary, and droop, the Amalek's would prevail, until

Aaron and Hur held up each of Moses' hands, until the going down of the sun, and Joshua defeated the Amaleks.

Remember what they did, they met you in the way, they attacked your rear ranks, and all of the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and they did not fear God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the Lord gives to you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget (25:18-19).

"You shall not forget. Blot them out." When Saul became king, Samuel came to Saul with the orders from the Lord, to go down and to utterly destroy Amalek. "Kill everything that breathes. Don't allow anything to remain alive, of the animals, anything. Wipe them all out. Utterly destroy them." And Saul went down, God delivered Amalek into his hands, but Saul saw some of the sheep and the cattle, they were really good, strong, healthy looking. So he kept them alive, and brought them back. The sickly ones they hacked to pieces. He also saved king Agag alive. As they returned, Samuel the prophet came out to meet him, and he said, "As the Lord liveth, I've done everything that the Lord told me to do". Samuel said, "If you've done everything that the Lord has told you to do, why do I hear the bleeding of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle", he said, "Oh, I've brought them back to sacrifice to the Lord". He said, "To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. And that you've done this! You've rebelled against God! You've done foolishly. The kingdom will be taken from you".

Amalek is a type of the flesh. The life of the flesh. Once we begin to walk in the spirit, we suddenly discover that we are in a real battle. The flesh is lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. In every child of God there is a tremendous spiritual battle. It's the battle for supremacy. Whether or not I am to be ruled by the flesh, or by the Spirit. You are a three fold being. You are a spirit, you dwell in a body, you possess a consciousness. The body isn't the real you. It is the instrument that God has given to express yourself. Now, when God created man, He created man a living spirit. He was spirit, soul (consciousness), and body. The spirit of man ruled over his mind, over his consciousness. So that Adam lived in the continual consciousness of the presence of God. Communion with God, fellowshiping with God. In that consciousness of God. But when Adam obeyed the fleshly desires, for the fruit was pleasant to look upon, it was tasty to eat, and it was desired to make him as wise as God. And when he ate of that fruit, yielding to the fleshly desires, his mind then began to be ruled by the flesh. The body drive, or the body appetites began to rule over him, and his mind now on body things, fleshly thing.

Jesus said concerning the heathen, "All they think about is what are we gonna drink, what are we gonna eat, what are we gonna wear". The fleshly things. "What am I gonna put on my body, what am I going to put into my body?" And the body appetites rule. Now that isn't God's divine order. That isn't the way God intended man to live. Body, mind, spirit. He intended that your mind be ruled by the Spirit. Because God is a superior trinity, Father, Son, Spirit, and we meet God in the realm of the spirit. His Spirit bears witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God. "God is a spirit, they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." God doesn't approach me intellectually, he doesn't approach me physically. He approaches me spiritually, and there is where I touch God, and have contact with God, but I only can have that when the spirit is uppermost. If the flesh is ruling in uppermost, then I am dead, as far as my consciousness of God is concerned. That is why Paul says, in Romans eight, "The mind of the flesh, or the mind that is ruled by the flesh, is dead. But the mind of the spirit is life, and peace and joy". Why? Because I'm in fellowship with God, I'm in union with God, because I am now living according to God's original intent, and divine intent. God intended that I live in fellowship with Him. When the Spirit is uppermost, I live in fellowship with God.

Now, when I have been born again, and that's what being born again is all about. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh. We were by nature the children of wrath, because by one man's sin, death entered the world and death by sin, for death passed on to all man for all sin with Adam." So I was born with a sinful nature, alienated from God. And Jesus said, "You've gotta be born again Nicodemus. For that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". "How can I be born again when I'm old? I can't go back the second time, in my mother's womb", "No Nicodemus, you don't understand". "Well then

how can I be born again?”, and Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in Him”, that’s how you’re born again, by believing in Jesus Christ. Spiritual birth, the moment I have the spiritual birth, the Spirit becomes uppermost. As Paul said, “I’m a new creature, the old things are passed away. Everything has become new”. People can’t understand you. “You’re different, what happened to you? You’re not the same!”, and quite often they say, “You’re not as much fun as you used to be. You know, you used to be a real nut! You used to get more soused than everybody else. You were a real fool! You were a lot of fun. We used to watch you and laugh like everything. You’re no fun anymore!”. Spirit uppermost, born again. Concerned about God, thinking of God, in fellowship with God.

But my flesh doesn’t like it here, down in the basement. My flesh wants to get on top again. So I find that there’s a warfare going on, and the flesh is warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. These two are in battle with each other, as to which is going to rule. Whether or not my mind will be controlled by my fleshly desires, or my mind will be controlled by the spirit, and in fellowship with God.

Now this battle with the flesh, as God said to Moses in the book of Exodus, where Amalek came out, He said to Moses at that time, “There will be a battle with Amalek from generation to generation”. In other words, there’s no end to this battle. As long as you’re gonna live in this body, you’re gonna have problems with the flesh. My problems with my flesh will cease the day I die, as far as a worldly definition of death. When my spirit moves out of this body, my problems with my flesh will be over, but they won’t be over until that day.

Don’t tell me you’re perfect, and don’t tell me that you have no problems with your flesh, because I won’t believe you, unless you’re an angel in disguise. But I, looking around, don’t think I see any. God said, “Take care of Amalek, remember what he did to you. Took advantage of your weakness”, and how the flesh takes advantage of our weakness.

Boy I’ll tell you Satan knows the weakest area in your life, and that’s where he attacks. “You were weary, you were tired, you were weak, he took advantage of it. Remember that, and utterly blot them out”. In the new testament, God said, “Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the desires thereof”. “They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with it’s affections and desires. Mortify therefore the deeds of the flesh, that you may live.” God’s sentence for my flesh, for my body isn’t now reformed, clean up! Reform the old man. Count ten, “No”, God said, “Kill him, put him to death, reckon him to be dead. Reckon the old man to be dead, that you might really be alive unto God, that we might be alive in the Spirit, that we might rule and reign”.

Now Paul the apostle, realized the problem that he had with his body, and he said, “I beat myself to keep my body under”, here’s the old body, wants to get up on top, Paul said, “I beat myself to keep my body under”. Because he knew that the flesh would like to be ruling again. “But I beat myself to keep the body under, lest even”, and I’ve been in this position of preaching to others. The body now gets uppermost, the flesh begins to rule and God sets me on the shelf, can’t use me anymore. Paul was fearful of that. He recognized that there was a problem. So he talked about that necessity of reckoning the old man to be dead, and, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, not I, but it’s now Christ living in me, and the life that I am now living, I’m living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”. So, the issue of the flesh.

Well, we got to chapter twenty six, and that’s where we’ll take off next week.

James said, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. For a man who hears the word, and yet doesn’t do it, is like a man who looks into the mirror, sees the truth about himself, but as soon as he walks away, he forgets”. In other words, you have a better image of yourself than you really are. You look in the mirror and you see the truth. You say, “Oh no!”. Then when you walk away, you forget all about it you know. You’re image of yourself, you like that better, “Cause really I’m not as heavy as the mirror says I am. I’m not as bald as the mirror says I am”. You forget the truth. So is the man, who looks at the law of God, and goes out and doesn’t do it, doesn’t abide by it.

God help us in dealing with the issues of our flesh. To really come to that place of reckoning the old man to be dead, that we might be alive unto God, in the Spirit. That we might live the life that God intended us to have, a spiritual life. Spirit dominated life. A life where the Spirit is uppermost. A life of joy, and

peace, and love, in Jesus Christ, with Him ruling. Make no provisions for your flesh. Don't make excuses for your flesh. Don't live after the flesh, that's an empty, frustrated life. It's not the life that God intended for you. He meant so much better for you. The life of the flesh is disappointment. The life of the flesh is frustrating. The life of the flesh will bring you to death, but the life of the Spirit is the life that's worth living. You must be born again, that you might live after the Spirit, and fulfill the very purpose of your existence, as you live in communion and fellowship with God.

May God help you to do so, through the power of His Spirit, that He imparts to you this week, as you choose to walk with Him. In Jesus' name.