

Deut. 24:1 ¶ When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.

Deut. 24:2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*.

Deut. 24:3 And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife;

Deut. 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for an inheritance*.

In this section of scripture I think I understand the scenario, but I don't understand the prohibition for remarriage to the first husband in light of the 2nd husband's death.

It seems to be saying that a man can choose to write a bill of divorcement to his wife if he finds her to be offensive for some reason after their marriage. She is then free to go and marry someone else. If the second husband also decides to give her a bill of divorcement or dies, her first husband is forbidden to remarry her.

Thinking.....

- For the first husband to want to take her back would indicate that his reason for divorcing her in the first place was invalid.
- The whole instruction is predicated on the actions of the men.
- This provision has no recourse for the woman finding fault with the husband.
- The woman is considered defiled to her first husband after he has divorced her.
- This brings us back to God's sovereignty in determining what constitutes cleanliness as discussed in the last chapter.
- God's original intention was for marriage to be between one man and one woman for life.

I guess to permit remarriage would undermine the seriousness of commitment to each other before the Lord when choosing a partner in the first place. Choosing a marriage partner is the second most important decision of a person's life and should be made in light of that fact that God recognizes the married couple as one body of flesh.

Genesis 2:24 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Deut. 24:5 ¶ When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

This instruction was touched upon in chapter 20, verse 7, regarding one who was betrothed to marriage. This instruction seems to apply to a man who is no longer

betrothed; he is a newlywed. This couple was to be allowed one full year to enjoy each other and build a foundation of love and trust without distraction due to other responsibilities. This is a privilege that I wish all newlyweds today could enjoy. Finally, in this instruction it seems that priority is given to the needs of the wife.

I think this instruction emphasizes the importance that God places on the marriage commitment. It allows a full year for a couple's total responsibility to be directed toward developing a strong relationship with one another.

Deut. 24:6 No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge.

This instruction prohibits the use of millstones as collateral for a loan. The millstone was necessary to providing for one's family and that provision was not to be jeopardized.

Deut. 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.

This instruction forbids kidnapping people to make a profit in the slave market. The penalty for disobedience—death.

Scripture is clear in presenting each individual life as precious before God. To sell someone into slavery is the same as committing them to a living death as far as their individual rights are concerned. Thus, the justification for the death penalty.

Deut. 24:8 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.

Deut. 24:9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

These verses pose the obvious question—What were the Levites to teach them? Leviticus 13-14 is devoted to this subject and specific guidelines are detailed as to dealing with this plague. Leprosy is very contagious and required stringent guidelines to avoid it spreading in the community. Again, the emphasis seems to be on maintaining cleanliness before God.

My question is why the reminder to remember what God did to Miriam. God struck Miriam with leprosy in response to a spirit of pride in trying to elevate Aaron and herself to a position equal to Moses as God's representative. She was shut out of the camp in shame for seven days before God healed her. (cf Numbers 12)

Maybe this was a reminder that the people were to be submissive to those whom God had established in authority over them; they weren't free to deviate from the commands of God. It seems to imply that failure to carefully obey the instructions from the Levites could result in judgment similar to Miriam's.

Deut. 24:10 When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.

Deut. 24:11 Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.

Deut. 24:12 And if the man *be* poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge:

Deut. 24:13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

If you make a loan to someone, you are not to enter his home to take the collateral; you were to wait outside for him to bring it out to you. This would seem to be in reference to protecting his dignity in front of his family. It would seem that the normal collateral a poor person would give for a loan would be his cloak. If the man is poor, you are not to keep his cloak overnight; you are to return it to him when the sun goes down so that he can sleep in it. This act of kindness will not go unrewarded by God.

I noted three things:

- You didn't have to be poor to seek a loan.
- We should always be sensitive to preserving a person's dignity in financial transactions.
- The poor man probably had only one thing that would qualify as collateral—his cloak.
- God expects us to be kind to the poor.

We in America today don't really understand what true poverty is about. Even the poorest among us have more than one change of clothing.

Deut. 24:14 ¶ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant *that is* poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates:

Deut. 24:15 At 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 the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

This instruction directs the people not to defraud a hired servant who is obviously poor and needy. They were to pay him for services rendered at the end of each day. No distinction was to be made between workers whether they were Israelites or foreigners; all were to be treated the same. If they were left unpaid, their cries to YHWH would be accounted as sin on your part. God is very clear in scripture that His eyes are ever watchful over the poor and helpless in the community.

Isaiah 41:17 "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."

Deut. 24:16 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.

This instruction clarifies that each person is accountable for his own sin; no parent could be punished for the actions of his child nor could children be

punished for the actions of their fathers. I would assume this to be in reference to grown children. God never contradicts Himself in His word, and I think this helps clarify a difficult verse in Exodus.

Exodus 20:5 "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"

An excerpt from that journal follows:

When we choose to follow other gods (really self), then we are building our lives on a lie which will impact in turn the lives of our children and in turn their children etc. It's interesting that the Lord used the designation of the 3rd & 4th generations. I just realized that those would be the normal generations of a man's lifespan at that time upon whom he would have direct impact. On the other hand, those who love Him and keep His commandments can expect God's love to be evident to their children for generations. The more submissive and obedient we are, the stronger the foundation for our progeny. God shows over and over again in the scripture how He is willing to be merciful and temper judgment in response to the desires of those who love and obey Him.

Deut. 24:17 Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

Deut. 24:18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

I'm surprised this instruction did not follow verse 13. God's word is very clear that we are not to take advantage of those who are most vulnerable to mistreatment—foreigners, the fatherless and widows.

Psalms 68:5 "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

Psalms 146:9 "The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."

Malachi 3:5 "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts."

They are to remember their vulnerability and mistreatment at the hands of their slavemasters in Egypt and how God delivered them. The implication--follow God's example in your treatment of others.

Note: This is not a suggestion; it is a command of God.

Deut. 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine 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

stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

Deut. 24:20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Deut. 24:21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Deut. 24:22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

These verses instruct the people not to glean what was missed after bringing in their crops. They are to leave what was missed to make provision for those in need, again specifying those who are most vulnerable—foreigners, the fatherless and widows. YHWH in fact declares this to be a prerequisite to ensure His blessing on their work efforts in the future.

Again it is emphasized that this is not a suggestion; it is a command of God.

Note that this is not a handout; the needy would have to work to benefit from this provision.