

DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 25

“If there is a dispute between men and they come into court and the judges decide between them, acquitting 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 number of stripes in proportion to his offense. 3 Forty stripes may be given him, but not more, lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight. 4 “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.

25:3 *forty lashes...but not more.* Beating could subject the culprit to abuse, so the law kept the punishment from becoming inhumane. Cf. Paul’s experience (2Co 11:24). (CSB)

Restraint on the one meting out punishment, which protected the humanity of both. (TLSB)

25:4 Applied to ministers of Christ in 1Co 9:9–10; 1Ti 5:17–18. (CSB)

treading out the grain. God’s Law shows concern not only for the poor, the widow, the stranger, and the criminal, but also for animals. cf Hos 10:11. Paul cites this compassionate law as proof by comparison that Christians ought to financially support ministers of the Gospel (1Co 9:9–14). (TLSB)

24:5–25:4 These miscellaneous laws protect the weak from the strong. Jesus may have had some of these laws in mind when He taught the Golden Rule: “Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Mt 7:12). Luther picks up on this loving concern for one’s neighbor in several of his explanations to the Commandments. When we examine our words and actions, we must confess our failure to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Thanks be to God for His compassion toward us! His Son loved us more than Himself, and He died for our sins. • Precious Savior, move me to love others more and more because of Your great love for me. Amen (TLSB)

Laws Concerning Levirate Marriage

5 “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. 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 son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. 7 And if the man does not wish to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to perpetuate his brother’s name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’ 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ 9 then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ 10 And the name of his house[a] shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.’

25:5–6 The continuity of each family and the decentralized control of land through family ownership were basic to the Mosaic economy. (CSB)

25:5 Some of Israel's neighbors also followed this practice. Except in the situation described here, such a marriage to a close family member was forbidden (Lv 18:16; 20:21). (TLSB)

25:9 These symbolic actions express utmost disdain, a public ritual of disgrace. (TLSB)

25:10 This family nickname would perpetuate the memory of a brother's loveless action. (TLSB)

25:5–10 The man who refused to marry his brother's widow lacked God's gift of love. He cared for his own interests, not his brother's. God calls us to live and act differently: in love. How very different is our Savior, who cared not for His own interests but for the interests of us all and has chosen the Church as His beloved Bride. • Dear Jesus, Your sacrifice leads me to sing, "Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!" Amen. (LSB 425:4) (TLSB)

Miscellaneous Laws

11 "When men fight with one another and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of him who is beating him and puts out her hand and seizes him by the private parts, 12 then you shall cut off her hand. Your eye shall have no pity. 13 "You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. 14 You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small. 15 A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 16 For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to the LORD your God. 17 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, 18 how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.

25:13–16 The last of the civil and criminal laws recorded in Dt. Such dishonest business practices were persistent and widespread in biblical times. Mel: "The lazy and wasteful are all thieves, for unless they take from someone else they cannot sustain their laziness and costly habits" (Chem, *LTh* 2:417). (TLSB)

25:14 *measures*. Of quantity. (CSB)

25:17–19 Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gn 36:9–12) who lived south and east of the Salt Sea. The Lord's judgment (Ex 17:14) is against Amalek because of their attack of Israel at Rephidim during the exodus. As Israel is about to enter the Promised Land, the Lord reminds them of this obligation (cf 1Sm 15; 30:16–20). (TLSB)

25:11–19 People in every society sin by taking unfair advantage of one another. Such behavior stirs the Lord to anger. He therefore authorizes Israel to blot out the memory of Amalek. God must address all sin by punishment, atonement, or forgiveness. Only because Jesus bore our punishment can we escape God's wrath and receive full pardon for our sins. • Lord Jesus, may Your goodness lead me to be an instrument of justice and fairness in the world. Amen. (TLSB)