

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?