

## Doctrine of the Widow

1. In the Jewish culture, a widow was expected to marry her husband's brother. This was known as a Levirate Marriage. The term is derived from the Latin word, *levir*, meaning "husband's brother.

*Genesis 38:11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.*

2. The Mosaic Law protected the widow from any form of affliction. The Lord promised to hear a widow's cry.

- *Exodus 22:22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.*

3. The Lord promised to hear a widow's cry and to severely punish the afflicter.

- *Exodus 22:22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.*

4. A Levitical priest could not marry a widow.

- *Leviticus 21:14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.*

5. The daughter of a priest who became a widow could return home to live with her father.

- *Leviticus 22:13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.*

6. The widow who made a vow unto the Lord was expected to honor it.

- *Numbers 30:9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.*

7. The LORD has bound Himself to exact justice for the widow.

- *Deuteronomy 10:17 For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: 18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.*

8. Those who feed the widow and looked after her needs are in turn blessed by the Lord God.
  - *Deuteronomy 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part or inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*
  
9. During the Feast of Weeks, the widow was to rejoice with others before the Lord God.
  - *Deuteronomy 16:11 And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there.*
  
10. The Feast of Tabernacles was a Feast of Thanksgiving for the Jews and demanded rejoicing.
  - *Deuteronomy 16:14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.*
  
11. During the harvest season, grain was to be left for the widows to gather and be fed. Those who left handfuls on purpose were blessed.
  - *Deuteronomy 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.*
  
12. In addition to wheat, olives and grapes were to be provided for the widows. This was not a handout, for that which was gathered had to be worked for. A helping hand can keep the dignity of the individual intact.
  - *Deuteronomy 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.*
  - *Deuteronomy 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.*
  
13. Part of the tithe was to help support the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows.
  - *Deuteronomy 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;*

14. The Israelite who helped widows could stand with a clear conscience before the Lord and give a good personal account. Part of Job's defense was that he did not harm the widow.

- *Deuteronomy 26:13 Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine 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 which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them:*
- *Job 31: If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;*

15. A curse is upon those who withhold a righteous judgment against a widow.

- *Deuteronomy 27:19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.*

16. The Lord used a widow to meet the needs of Elijah.

- *1 Kings 17:7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.*

17. A widow can know greater sorrow in life in the death of a child.

- *1 Kings 17:20 And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?*

18. The wicked do not hesitate to hurt the widow.

- *Psalms 94:6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*

19. Part of the petition of an imprecatory prayer is that the wife of an enemy be left a widow.

- *Psalms 109:9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*

20. The Lord has pledged Himself to provide relief to the widow.

- *Psalms 146:9 The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*
- *Proverbs 15:25 The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.*

21. Social justice demands that the widow be pleaded for in her affliction and that no violence be done to her.

- *Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.*
- *Jeremiah 22:3 Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.*
- *Zechariah 7:10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

22. The Lord condemned the social injustices found in Israel. One indictment was the cause of the widow was not addressed in a just court of law.

- *Isaiah 1:23 Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.*

23. Part of Israel's condition for remaining in Palestine, was contingent upon how the widow was treated.

- *Jeremiah 7:6 If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.*

24. Military destruction is analogous to a widow in mourning.

- *Lamentations 1:1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people how is she become as a widow she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary.*

25. Those who hurt the widow are numbered among the greatest of sinners in society.

- *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.*

26. Faithful acts of worship by a widow does not go unnoticed by the Lord.

- *Mark 12:42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:*

27. God is pleased to remember and reward the faithfulness of a widow.

- *Luke 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; 37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

28. Jesus once comforted a grieving widow by raising her son from the dead.

- *Luke 7:12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

29. A persistent widow can prevail with the Lord.

- *Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*

30. Children have a responsibility to their widowed mother.

- *1 Timothy 5:4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.*

31. As the Old Testament church provided for widows, so the church of the New Testament was to provide for widows if four qualifications were met.

- A woman had to be needy. *1 Timothy 5:5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate...*
- A woman had to be righteous. *1 Timothy 5:5 ... trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.*
- A woman had to be at least sixty years old. *1 Timothy 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old...*
- A woman had to have been married only once. *1 Timothy 5:9 ... having been the wife of one man.*