



Jim Rickard Bible Ministries
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The Book of Proverbs
Chapter 23

We continue with **Saying 11, vs. 10-11**, which is also the 10th and last Saying of the Decalogue warning about the dangers of the lustful pursuit of wealth.

Prov 23:10-11, “Do not move the ancient boundary or go into the fields of the fatherless, ¹¹For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their case against you.”

Vs. 10

Prov 23:10, “Do not move the ancient boundary or go into the fields of the fatherless.”

As we noted in our previous study, these are two warnings not to take or steal other people’s property.

The first half is a reiteration of **Saying 5**, in **Prov 22:28, “Do not move the ancient boundary which your fathers have set.”**

The second half emphasizes not to take advantage of the weak and helpless people (strangers, widows, orphans, etc.) of society. As such, this is a stern warning against oppressing or taking advantage of helpless people, cf. **Ex 22:21-22; Deut 27:17, 19; Jer 22:3; Zech 7:9-10.**

In summary, we see two of the 10 Commandments in this Saying, the 8th, (**Ex 20:15; Lev 19:11, 13; Deut 5:19; Mat 19:18; Rom 13:9, cf. Ex 22:7-15**), and 10th.

Lev 19:11-13, “You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. ¹²You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD. ¹³You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.”

These verses lead us into the second half of this Saying in **vs. 11**.

Vs. 11

Prov 23:11, “For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their case against you.”

This is the then or results statement telling us why we should not steal from anyone, especially the weak and oppressed. It is two-fold:

1) **“For their Redeemer is strong,”** KI with the Qal Active Participle of the Verb GA’AL, “to redeem, ransom, deliver.” This is the only time GA’AL is used in Proverbs, though it is used many times in the OT and for “redeemer” or sometimes “near kinsman.”

This Hebrew term designates a male relative who delivers or rescues, **Gen 48:16; Ex 6:6**, redeems property, **Lev 27:9-25**, or person, **Lev 25:47-55**, avenges the murder of a relative as a guiltless executioner, **Num 35:9-34**, and receives restitution for wrong done to a relative who has since died, **Num 5:8**. The unique emphasis of the redemption / salvation / vindication associated with the kinsman-redeemer is the fact that this action is carried out by a kinsman on behalf of a near relative in need.

The Pronominal usage of this Adjective is emphasized here and speaks of God Himself who is the Redeemer of all mankind, cf. **Job 19:25; Psa 19:14; 78:35; Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16**. And specifically, we know the Redeemer to be our Lord Jesus Christ, **Jer 50:34; Gal 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18**.

Jer 50:34, “Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case so that He may bring rest to the earth, but turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon.”

Gal 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”.”

1 Peter 1:18-19, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers. ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.”

The main meaning of GA’AL is to do the duty of a kinsman and thus redeem his kin from difficulty or danger. There are two individuals in the OT that were “Kinsman Redeemers” that give us “types” of Jesus Christ as our Kinsman Redeemer. They are Jeremiah and Boaz, **Jer 32:6–9; Ruth**, (esp. **4:8**). As such, this word reminds us of the principles associated with the “kinsmen redeemer,” who has the duty of a kinsman and thus redeems his kin from any difficulty or danger, cf. **Deut 25:5-10; Ruth 4:1-6**.

Jesus Christ is not only our redeemer from sin, He is a kinsman to us and understands our struggles. Thus, He is able to help us in our times of need, **Heb 2:16-18; 4:14-16**.

Heb 2:14-18, “Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. ¹⁶For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

Heb 4:14-16, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

As noted above, GA’AL is also used in the phrase “the avenger of blood,” which is a technical or legal term for the individual upon whom the responsibility to avenge a wrongful death is laid, **Num 35:19, 21, 24f, 27; Josh 20:3, 5**.

Num 35:19, “The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him.”

Num 35:21, “If he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and *as a result* he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.”

Joshua 20:1-5. “Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, ²“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, ³that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴He shall flee to one of these cities, and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and state

his case in the hearing of the elders of that city; and they shall take him into the city to them and give him a place, so that he may dwell among them. ⁵Now if the avenger of blood pursues him, then they shall not deliver the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor without premeditation and did not hate him beforehand.”

The warning in our passage is emphasized by saying this Redeemer is “**strong**,” the Adjective CHAZAQ, “firm, hard, strong, severe, etc.” Here it refers to God’s “power, strength, and force.” Given the context of the second phrase, it refers to God’s power and authority to rule and judge. As such, we see the principle of the Godhead as the Supreme Court of Heaven. We will see more of this aspect below.

2) “**He will plead their case against you**,” uses the Pronoun HU, “He,” with the Qal Imperfect of the Verb RIV, “to conduct a lawsuit, to contend, dispute, strive, etc.” Then we have Particle ET “their,” with the Noun RIV, “lawsuit, case, contention, etc.” And finally, the Preposition ET with a Pronominal Prefix meaning, “with you.” In other words, “The Lord God (Jesus Christ) conducts/disputes their case against you.”

This is similar to what is noted in **Prov 22:22-23**, “**Do not rob the poor because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; ²³For the LORD will plead their case and take the life of those who rob them.**”

An important aspect of God’s plan and will is justice without regard for social class, position, or status. Solomon warns those who oppress others (the weaker), because they have the means to do so, will bring God’s condemnation and enmity against them, cf. **Prov 15:25; 22:28**. In the absence of a human redeemer, the Lord Himself will fight for them, **Ex 22:21-24; Psa 140:12**. Therefore, you DO NOT want to get into a fight with the ALMIGHTY God!!!

Ex 22:21-24, “**You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²²You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. ²³If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; ²⁴and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.**”

Psa 140:12, “**I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted and justice for the poor.**”

Therefore, God is directing us to not mistreat the weak and helpless in our society, by taking even what little they have away from them illicitly. Instead, we are to treat the helpless in our society well, and our attitude toward them is to reflect God’s attitude toward Israel when they were helpless in Egypt, cf. **Deut 10:12-19; 14:28f; 24:17-22; 26:12-15; Jer 51:36**.

Deut 10:18-19, “**He (God) executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.**”

Deut 14:29, “**The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.**”

Deut 24:17-22, “**You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge. ¹⁸But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing. ¹⁹When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. ²¹When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. ²²You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.**”