

THE FATHER'S HEART FOR ORPHANS & WIDOWS (IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—PART 3)

“Lord, You know the hopes of the helpless. Surely You will listen to their cries and comfort them.” Psalms 10:17

This will be the last of the Father's Heart series from the Old Testament. We've looked at how the Lord established laws under the Old Covenant in order to protect the orphans and widows. The Lord was well aware of the human nature's tendency to try and take advantage of those who are weak and helpless. Proverbs 23:10-11 says, *“Do not move the ancient boundary or go into the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is strong: HE will plead their case against you.”* Often when a person or child comes into a helpless condition, there are predators who will try to take everything they can. Remember the widow in Luke 18 who was continually going to the judge seeking legal protection from her opponent? Not only was she needing protection for herself and probably her possessions, but the unrighteous judge was not the least bit concerned about her need! That is the story retold millions of times throughout this wicked world in which we live.

We've looked at some of His judgments and curses which He pronounces upon those who would try to hurt the orphans or widows. This time, let's just look at His compassionate Heart toward them (and this is just from the Old Testament).

In Psalms 146:6 we see that He is such a great *“God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them”*. But what a beautiful picture we have of the Lord, when at times in the Word He is so highly exalted, yet immediately following is a description of One Who is deeply compassionate upon the weak. Verse 7 says, *“Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises up those who are bowed down...He supports the fatherless and the widow”*. Job 5:9-11 says, *“Who does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number! He gives rain on the earth and sends water on the fields, so that He sets on high those who are lowly; and those who mourn are lifted to safety.”* Notice these passages begin by talking about His greatness, then follow with a description of this great God's character! Psalms 22:23-24 says, *“...and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor has He hidden His Face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard.”* There are so many afflicted and oppressed people and children on the earth, yet most have little or no knowledge of our Heavenly Father or Jesus Christ. They do cry, but to their idols and to the wrong “gods”. And of course, many are in desperate conditions, but look to the wrong things or people trying to find relief and comfort. Let's pray that the Lord, in His great mercy, will help so many more to understand that HE is the One they need to cry out to.

The Lord Jesus saw the multitudes in Matthew 9 and *“felt com-*



HOPE girl, Sravanthi (11) and helper Nirmala serving the widows, with Buelah & helper Persis dishing out the food

passion for them”. And what was the result of His compassion? *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’”* Many people, even in the Church, tend to accuse the Lord for all the suffering in the world. But He has compassion, and therefore wants us to pray. Is it possible that WE are the ones lacking compassion? Are we praying for them like He told us to do? Are we praying that laborers would be sent to them, that His Truth and love would reach the hurting? WE are the Body of Christ, and the Head (Jesus) has told His Body to *“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation”, “make disciples of all the nations”* and to *“beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers”*. Perhaps we need to stop questioning the character of our Lord, and start looking into our own hearts. Are we doing what He would have us to do?

Psalms 35:10 says, *“All my bones will say, ‘Lord, who is like You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?’”* Ps. 113:5-7 says, *“Who is like the Lord our God, Who is enthroned on high Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap...”* Look at the beauty of our Father: *“The poor commits himself to You; You have been the Helper of the orphan. You will incline Your Ear to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed”* (Ps. 10:14, 18). *“You have been a Defense for the helpless, a Defense for the needy in his distress”* (Isaiah 25:4). *“For in You the orphan finds mercy”* (Hosea 14:3).

Brothers and sisters, it's not enough to just rejoice in the love and mercy of our God. Let's pray that we will have more of His Heart within us for a desperately lost and hurting world. *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you...”* Ephesians 5:1-2