



What Does the Bible Teach About Caring for Orphans?

James 1:27 - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

What Is Written?

- What has God's pattern been since the beginning?
- In the Patriarchal Dispensation, every child was to be cared for.
- Abraham and Jacob had children by servants and were required by God to care for them and to give them an inheritance equal to those of children born to their wives. Abraham had to receive special permission from God to send Ishmael away - Gen. 21:9-13
- Even the non-believers in Babylon had a law requiring this (The Code of Hammurabi, Anet 157, and the Lipit Ishtar Code 24).

What Is Written?

- **God condemned, utterly destroyed, and sent into oblivion the Canaanite nations that practiced child sacrifices**
 - **Lev. 20:2-5 - “Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 'I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. 4 'And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5 'then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people...”**

What Is Written?

- God commanded in the Law of Moses that the Children of Israel must care for orphans
 - Deut. 10:17-19 - “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

What Is Written?

- **Deut. 24:19-22 - “When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 22 And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.”**

What Is Written?

- Deut. 26:12-13 - “When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year-the year of tithing-and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, 13 then you shall say before the LORD your God: I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them”
- Deut. 27:19 - “Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen!”

What Is Written?

- Those who neglected them were sent to perdition
 - Mal. 3:5-6 - “And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien-Because they do not fear Me,’ Says the LORD of hosts. 6 ‘For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.’”

What Is Written?

- **God made caring for the fatherless a condition of their salvation**
 - **Isa. 1:16-18 - “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, Says the LORD, Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.”**
- **He still defines religion by the care of orphans**
 - **James 1:27 - “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”**

What Is Written?

- Orphans are not mentioned often in the New Testament, because by that time, God had already clearly revealed His thoughts regarding them, as well as His thoughts toward those who would neglect them
 - John 14:18 - “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”
 - James 1:27

Visiting Orphans

- Who are orphans?
- “Orfanov, orphanos” - bereaved, parentless, comfortless, fatherless (Strong's).
- The word means fatherless. Children without fathers and mothers to support them physically, intellectually, emotionally, and especially, spiritually

Visiting Orphans

- Eph. 6:4 - "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."
- Gen. 18:19 - "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."
- Psalm 78:4 - "We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done."
- Prov. 22:6 - "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

Visiting Orphans

- What is visit?
- God is a Father to the fatherless - Psalm 68:5.
- If we profess to be like our Father in heaven, in what way are we fathers to the fatherless?
- Visit is episkeptomai - “to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes, in order to see how he is, to visit, go see one; to look upon in order to help or benefit; look after, have a care for, provide for” (Thayer)

Visiting Orphans

- “To go to see and relieve” (Strong’s)
- “To look upon, care for, exercise oversight” (Vines)
- Note that the word *episkeptomai* is related to the Greek word for overseer, *episkopos*, the word from which we derive the office of bishops or elders who oversee the work of a congregation and feed the flock among them.
- So what is meant by visiting orphans? To oversee their care and upbringing, and to feed and clothe them

Visiting Orphans

- How is visit used elsewhere in the scriptures?
- Luke 1:68, 78-79 - Zacharias prophesied that God would visit mankind, a prophecy about the coming Messiah. Christ did not have brief chat with humankind. His visit was a direct, personal interaction to help us.
- Acts 7:23-24 - Moses' visit to his brethren involved his taking personal action in their defense.
- Acts 15:36 - Paul and Barnabas visited the brethren directly to see how the work was progressing and to help them with whatever they needed.

Visiting Orphans

- **Matt. 25:35-36 - Visiting those in prison means taking care of their needs, not by sending gifts but by directly interacting with them in prison**
- **“James strikes a downright blow here at ministry by proxy, or by mere gifts of money. Pure and undefiled religion demands personal contact with the world’s sorrow: to visit the afflicted, and to visit them in their affliction.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)**

Visiting Orphans

- It is evident that placing money in the collection plate will not fulfill the command to visit widows and orphans.
 - This is not taking them into our oversight and care
 - This is an individual duty, not a collective command



Visiting Orphans

- It is also evident that just being a member of a church that doesn't support orphans' homes will not fulfill the command to visit widows and orphans.
 - Ask: who is James talking to? The context says "oneself"; that means you and me as individuals.
 - Ask again: What are you doing to help widows and orphans?
 - Now ask: Are you comfortable facing God in Judgment with that answer?

What Does the Bible Teach About Caring for Orphans?

- **Matt. 25:41-45 - “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ 45 Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’”**