

July 12, 1996

Asl

To all apostolic workers and elders in all the Tribes of God,

I am writing to express something of utmost importance for the welfare of each community and to those who are under your care.

The Widow and the Orphan

Exodus 22:22

Do not take advantage of the widow or orphan. This applies to the woman who has no husband or the single brother or sister who have no parents in the Body. They have no one to *protect* them from the *leaders* who have no discretion or those who lack good sense. Ignorance of the Law is no excuse, since this is even a *natural law of conscience* for those who do not know God personally — Rom 2:12-16.

The leaders must treat a widow as they would want their own wives to be treated by the leaders, if they were to die. They should never treat a widow with any less discretion or respect than they would feel God would, for God Himself said that He is a *defender of the widow*, Ps 68:5. But who does God have to defend the widow, except the leaders? If the leaders mistreat the widows, whom do they serve? Such leaders will not go unpunished — Ex 22:24.

Widows are objects of God's special concern, and kindly care is commanded by Him for their sakes — James 1:26-27. He has no one else on earth to give them this care except through the leaders in *His Household* (and also those people in the world who *live* by the natural law of conscience who do not have the Law or commands from the scriptures to guide their behavior toward widows). Those who are worthy of *the nations* will abide in the boundaries of their conscience in caring for widows. As our Master would say, they will enter the Kingdom before leaders who mistreat widows or single brothers and sisters.

Are they defenseless? God is their defender, but He defends through His people who are leaders in His Household on earth. He will defend them at the *expense of the lives* of those who mistreat widows and *others* who have no other covering except the leaders who take advantage of them. *Afflict* means to treat with contempt.

Ex 22:22 — *You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless person.*

God even *defends* the leaders also, *that is*, whoever is a ruler of His people — Ex 22:28. A ruler is one who rules in justice, righteousness, mercy, and compassion — Dt 24:17; Ex 23:9. If someone does not know this so as to *sympathize* with them, then they must *empathize* with them or be in violation of the Law of God — Jer 7:6-7.

Afflict — (in Ex 22:22) means: give pain and grief to, or distress, trouble, or adversity, causing depression or hardship.

Those who are afflicted can appeal to God's righteous rulers — Ps 68:5; 10:14. God frustrates the way of the wicked who oppress the widow — Ps 5:4-5; *146:9. God provides relief to the humble and those without support — *Ps 147:6; Dt 10:18. Even in the nations God defends the widows, the true widows in the world.

The word *visit* (NASV) in James 1:27 (#1980) should accurately be rendered, "*to relieve, look out for, to look upon with mercy, favor, to regard, to take care of, *to go see and care for.*" See to it that they are being *defended, protected, relieved of their distress, etc.*

That is true religion, which means being *relinked* to God, truly connected. *Religion* (#2357) is: re-jointed, joined to God and serving Him, devoutly, which is our *sacred service* — Acts 26:7.

...as they earnestly serve God night and day.

So when we are not linked to God (out of fellowship with Him) we won't *take care* of widows and orphans either. For we must make the *extra effort* to attend and cover these special brothers or sisters. They don't have the natural covering of a father, mother, or husband to attend to their needs. They have no one to defend them and make sure they aren't being *taken advantage of* unless the leaders are seeing to it for their sakes. They are appointed to this charge to ensure they are defended, protected, and receiving all the grace they need — Heb 13:17.

That is why James 1:26 goes on to say, "If anyone thinks himself to be *really* "relinked" to God, then he will make it *evident* by his conduct towards such people in the Body, providing the loving care and covering they so desperately need. They must "bridle their tongues" and not

scold or get frustrated with these special children. *They must act as God Himself would act on their behalf. If He defends them, the leaders will defend them also.* Otherwise, that man deceives his own heart (thinking himself to be in fellowship) when in fact he is *unlinked* and his faith is useless (worthless).

God defends widows. He is a *defender* of the widow as a lawyer defends his client. His Law firm is established. He is not only their Lawyer, but He is also the Judge for the widow — Ps 10:12. He is a Judge and Protector of the widow.

So beware. Do not be *in the flesh* when you, as a representative of the Judge and Protector of the widow, speak to the widow or scold her or reprove her. Make sure you are representing the Judge and the Protector and the Defender. If God is *for* her, who could be *against her?*