

Deuteronomy 25:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

Analysis

And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed—the Hebrew *beit chalutz ha-na'al* (בֵּית חָלוּץ הַנָּעַל) became a permanent designation, a nickname of disgrace. The family would be known by this epithet, a lasting memorial of the ancestor who refused family duty. This wasn't merely personal shame but generational stigma, affecting descendants' reputations.

The permanent naming contrasts sharply with the law's purpose—preserving names and memory. The refuser's ironic memorial was precisely the disgrace he inflicted on his brother: being remembered shamefully or not at all. The severity indicates how seriously Israel valued family solidarity and the duty to preserve brothers' legacies. Modern individualism struggles to appreciate this, but ancient honor-shame cultures understood social reputation as more valuable than personal comfort.

Historical Context

Delivered circa 1406 BC in preparation for settlement in Canaan. In oral cultures with strong genealogical memory, names and reputations mattered intensely. Honor and shame were public commodities affecting marriage prospects, business dealings, and social standing. The stigma would follow the family through generations, a deterrent to selfish refusal. This system worked effectively only in tight-knit communities where everyone knew everyone's history.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the honor-shame culture of the Bible differ from modern Western guilt-innocence culture?
2. Should Christians value family reputation and legacy, or is this thinking obsolete? Why?
3. What actions today might bring 'permanent names' (good or bad) to families and communities?

Interlinear Text

וְנִקְרָא א	שְׁמוֹ ו	בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל ל	בֵּית ית	חָל וַיֵּץ
shall be called	And his name	in Israel	The house	loosed
H7121	H8034	H3478	H1004	H2502
הַנֶּעֱלָ:				
of him that hath his shoe				
H5275				