Dr. Michael Harbin, Social Justice for Social Outliers in Ancient Israel, Part 2, Widows, Orphans and Resident Aliens Defined

This is Dr. Michael Harbin in his teaching on Social Justice for Social Outliers in Ancient Israel. This is part two, Widows, Orphans, and Resident Aliens Defined.

Shalom, I'm Michael Harbin, and we are continuing our presentation on social justice and social outliers in ancient Israel.

This particular session will be about Widows, Orphans, and Resident Aliens, and we're going to define the terms. In part one, we looked at Israelite culture during the late Bronze Age, drawing from Old Testament text, archeology, ethno-archeology, and somewhat from comparative cultures. We observed that the Israelite culture of that period primarily consisted of villages, sometimes called cities in the text, which we described as closely clustered dwellings surrounded by a common field or agricultural area, which was divided into individually owned portions.

Our premise was that the resulting social structure produced the cultural norms that underlie many of the Old Testament narrative accounts, including especially the account of Ruth. While God promised to bless the nation so that it would prosper, He also made it clear from the beginning that the nation would never reach that status. There would always be outliers who struggled economically.

This tension is exemplified in Deuteronomy 15 and its discussion of the Sabbath year, which both promises that there will be no poor among you in 15:4, albeit with the caveat that the people had to obey and warns that the poor will never cease to be in the land in 15:11. This tension demonstrates a dichotomy between the ideal based upon total obedience and reality resulting from continued disobedience. In His mercy, God provided a social justice safety net in the Torah to assist individuals and families who face adversity regardless of the reason. However, given the strong family ties and extended family groupings living in close proximity to a village, which we noted in Part 1, one wonders why the Old Testament singles out widows and orphans for special social justice provisions.

Likewise, given the strict separation commanded with respect to non-Israelites, one must also wonder not only that the special social justice provisions were provided for widows and orphans but also for them and that they are regularly included with the widows and the orphans as a triad, which I have abbreviated as this phrase, WORA. Widows, Orphans, Resident Aliens. For ease of handling, we'll use this four-letter word.

Richard Hiers includes the three groups as slaves with classes of persons who are especially vulnerable because they lack independent means of support. While that sounds reasonable, and we do see aspects of that in such cases as Naomi and Ruth, as well as the widow of Zarephath associated with Elijah, it seems to look through the situation through a Western cultural lens of nuclear families. In our Western culture, we think of nuclear families as basically two generations, parents and children, as shown in this picture.

For the sake of economy, I include this as one child of each, but the number could range from one child to half a dozen or more and a variety of males and females. The Hebrew culture had a different perspective. First, we must address a common conception that large families were the norm for Israel during that era.

A key example is Jacob, whose family consisted of 70 when he moved to Egypt, not including his wives. However, that figure, or the wives of his sons, were specifically exempted. That figure included multiple wives for Jacob and not only included children but also grandchildren in Genesis 46.7. Another aspect or example is Gideon, who is recorded in Judges 8.30 as having 70 sons.

While that text does not explicitly mention grandsons, the word translated sons here does include or could refer to grandsons, as with Jacob. That passage also records that Gideon had many wives, although we're not told how many. When we look at this in the broader context, we find that there seem to be exceptions.

Jacob's father, Isaac, had one set of twins, Jacob and Esau. Isaac's father, Abraham, had one son through his wife, Sarah, and a second through his concubine. Because of their long life, he did father six more sons through a third wife, Keturah, after Sarah had died.

But even when we consider Jacob, his first wife Leah had six sons, and the other three wives had only two each. Rachel died in childbirth after the second son. And although we're not told how many daughters they had, there do seem to be a few.

When we look at the judges who lived during that period we are studying, we see extremes. Gideon had 70 offspring through many wives, but Samson had none. He died early.

Jephthah had only a daughter. Elimelech, Naomi's husband, had only two sons, and neither of the sons had any children, even though they were married. Philip King and Lauren Steger, in their life in Biblical Israel, estimate from the overall evidence that the Israelite women averaged four live births.

That would suggest a basic nuclear family of six, but they suggest that child mortality lowered the family to four. That's what we have in our diagram here. Their premise, I think, seems to be high.

Let me rephrase that. Their premise seems to be that of a high infant mortality rate, which sounds like 50%, three to four years between conceptions, because of nursing, combined with a shorter period of fertility. I would suggest that the infant mortality rate of 50% is high, and the last two figures, as well as the number of conceptions, seem low.

So personally, I am more familiar and more comfortable with a basic family consisting of four to six surviving children. Typical nuclear family, then, of six to eight. Now, I do put one or two sons and two daughters.

It could be any combination. Another point of contrast between the Hebrew culture and our modern Western culture is a norm that seems evident for this period, which we've already alluded to. That item is that, most often, the family consists of three generations.

Grandparents, or the surviving grandparent, most often the grandmother, lived with the son, and his wife, and their children. To contrast this with our conception of a two-generation nuclear family, I have adopted the title of a molecular family to show a more typical structure for Israel—man and wife, parents of the man, and then children.

The social baseline developed in part one provides important background, so let us remind ourselves of some basic observations. A number of studies indicate that a typical family would have consisted of a man growing up within a given village, where he would have learned to work the land of his ancestors, which for Israel was largely the land that God had given the nation at the time of the settlement. He would have married a woman from the same kinship group, likely from either the same village or one very closely nearby.

The wife would have moved into the household of the husband, and this arrangement seems to be what the Old Testament calls the house of the father or the father's household. Initially, it seems likely that the couple resided in the same compound house that his parents lived in. Assuming that both spouses survived to the point that their children reached adulthood, and they had a marriage with children of their own, there would have been a change in the relationship as the parents, or actually, now grandparents would have aged.

The transition for this might have been gradual if both parents survived but were no longer able to work as rigorously as earlier, or it might have been rather sudden with the death of one of the grandparents. Given what is viewed as a typical difference in

ages between the spouses, many scholars suggest that the wives normally would have been 10 to 15 years younger than their husbands. The surviving spouse was more likely the widow.

In that case, if the oldest son was not already managing the farm, he would take that responsibility, and it would be likely that we would have a molecular family like this. I lost a slide there. Based on this, in the city or village, there would be many relationships with other families, and we just jumped ahead to that.

This situation would be very complex, and the nevox level would be an extended family, relatives tied in. For our purposes, we might consider the interrelationships between molecular families. This gets into aunts, uncles, and cousins, or at least first cousins, and may be called extended families.

This chart is based on the material of Leviticus 18, which lists different women that an Israelite man would have been forbidden to have sexual relations with. In my forthcoming Leviticus commentary, I label this the extended family because it seems to denote certain relationships for which sexual relationships were forbidden, and thus, marriage would be forbidden. This chart takes us out at least to second cousins.

That would be the first place that marriage could be considered a viable option. Today, we think of social fabric as a collection of family units, very often not even from the same parts of the world, let alone being closely related. For Old Testament Israel, settled in the land, most of those relationships would either be in the same village or other villages in the near vicinity.

From our new perspective, this pattern puts new emphasis on the concept of blood relative. Clearly, the social fabric of the culture would have been closely knit, producing a situation where a tear in the social fabric would have widespread implications. The model I like to use for this is a quilt.

As I thought about it, I chose a pattern that my mother made for each of her grandchildren as wedding gifts for when they got married. The pattern is called a wedding ring, and I chose this because of the way the various elements interweave to provide an overall pattern that can be extended indefinitely. The premise that I am working with, however, is that the social justice of marriage is intended to preserve the social fabric.

We will look at this social fabric model in more detail in parts three and four. In the Israelite culture, there seem to have been two higher levels of social structure as part of the nation. These were a clan and then the tribe.

We will not get into this study since, in the areas of social justice, it seems like most of the interactions have been on the village-city level and these aspects of the

extended family. Archaeologically, Uzi Avner suggests that some evidence of extended families would be about 25 persons, as we look at this. This begins to create a complex social structure.

This slide shows some of the various relationships involved, and each one of those figures around the man and his wife represents another family. So, you can start seeing how these all interact. As we look at this complex chart, remember that there are many variations of this, especially if more siblings are involved at any level.

Moreover, most likely, all of these relatives would live in the same city and or at least in some of the hamlets surrounding it. The point is that should a man die, and the surviving widow would have a network of relatives in her community that should provide support in a variety of ways. When we begin to talk about widows, one thing that often is not considered is how often she was when she lost her husband.

If she was younger, then remarriage was a possibility. If the Torah is followed and her husband has a brother, then the brother is expected to marry her. If she didn't have children, that is, if she didn't have children already.

If she had children, then it seems to have been expected that the children would provide her security in her old age. This would be especially the case if the children were married. In fact, if the widow was older, then it may have well been that she was already living with a son.

A number of studies suggest that this is the expected pattern. A widow would live with her married children who had inherited and are now working the family land. Thus, for many Israelites, the family they would have experienced as they grew up would have been something like this.

A man and his wife, maybe four children, a mother and a mother-in-law. With that expansion in the material, let's define three key outlier groups—first, the widow.

We've already noted that in most cases, a widow would be living with her adult son, of course, depending upon her age. If that's the case, even though there were likely exceptions, why does the text give a blanket statement regarding widow provisions? And when one considers orphans, the issue gets more complicated. Given the close residential proximity and extended family ties presented in Part 1, how could an orphan fall between the cracks so as to be entirely without the support necessary in the provisions cited in the text? Also, why do Victor Matthews and Don Benjamin, in their study of ancient Israel's social world, suggest that widows and orphans were legally homeless without any social, political, or economic status? Actually, they categorized them as prostitutes.

Limited women. This is problematic for several reasons. First, it seems to assume that all orphans were female.

Second, they never address the third group, the resident aliens, who seem generally to have been males. Third, their categorization assumes that all three were homeless. As already noted, a widow likely lived with her adult children.

Even if that were not the case, as noted in Part 1, a widow was not necessarily homeless. The same is true of a resident alien. Further, the concept of homelessness itself is problematic.

Homelessness was not unknown in the ancient world, but its characterization seems vastly different from how we understand it today. Modern homelessness seems to be a product of urban, somewhat industrial societies. In predominantly agricultural societies with large, unpopulated regions, a homeless person could disappear into the unsettled regions or wander from village to village, working as an itinerant worker.

Biblical material suggests that both occurred in ancient Israel. In fact, two key examples are ascribed in the period that we are studying. The first would be David.

When he fled from Saul, he, along with his followers, went wherever they could go into the wilderness with strongholds and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph in 1 Samuel 23. Today, we might say that they were bivouacking or perhaps roughing it. In essence, they were living off the land, often staying in caves, not bedding along streets in a city.

Thus far, I have seen no evidence of an Israelite making a semi-permanent camp along a major street in Jerusalem during the Iron Age. The second example would be Jonathan Ben Gershom, a Levite from Bethlehem during the period of Judges. Judges 17.8 relates how he left Bethlehem to, quote, stay wherever he could find a place, unquote.

He ended up in the hilly country of Ephraim, where he was given a place to stay and a job serving as a priest for Micah. For these, in American culture, hobo might be a better term or analog. While not an alien, Jonathan does seem to exemplify this Old Testament resident alien provision.

J. A. Thompson simply categorizes widows, orphans, and resident aliens as poor, which seems rather obvious since the provisions prescribed to ameliorate their status were economic. However, this really does not address why they were poor. J. B. McConville presents a slightly different nuance when he states that, quote, they were not strictly the same as the poor, unquote, but rather those whose independent legal standing may not be recognized.

While other suggestions have been made, the question remains: what did they have in common in Israelite culture that merited special consideration? To answer this, we will first define each group and then evaluate what the three had in common. Widows. By definition, the English word widow denotes a, quote, woman who has lost her husband to death and has not remarried.

The Hebrew is more complex. While the English word is most commonly a translation of the Hebrew word almanah, the situation is more complex. In a paper presented at Harvard University in 2003, Naomi Steinberg notes that there are actually three Hebrew words that are translated as widow.

We have the almanah, which simply means widow. We have the ishah almanah, which might be better translated as a widowed woman. And then we have the eshet hamat, which is best translated as the wife of the dead man or the wife of the dead, actually.

She distinguishes the three on the basis of property and economic resources. The last two are both categorized as indicating a widow who has inherited, as she says, property over which she has control. She explains the status of the second two categories, the ishah almanah and the eshet hamat, as follows, quote, quote, the second category has redemption rights in her husband's ancestral estate, which she exercised through her son.

That's the second category, a widowed woman, whereas the wife of the dead man had died, quote, before fathering an heir to exercise the redemption rights to his ancestral holdings, end quote. This is an interesting concept, which runs counter to our typical understanding of land ownership and the rights of women. While she seems to support her distinction, it is an area that could use more work, especially with a more nuanced understanding of the socioeconomic background that we have provided in part one.

In contrast, an almanah is deemed a widow in destitution, who may have living male relatives, male adult relatives who are either, quote, too poor or unwilling to offer her economic support. Hofner argues that an almanah could own land, which might be converted or an object of fraudulent misappropriation. Steinberg's distinctions do not answer all the questions.

For example, what would one call a woman who had raised her family before she lost her husband and was now living with a married son and family, which seems to have been the social norm? Further, if the widow had control of the family property, whether or not she had a grown son, why would there be such an imperative for the gleaning laws? If a widow did not have control of the family property after the loss of her husband, would she and any younger children with her truly be homeless in a

village where she was part of an extended family and even larger kinship group since it most likely had been an endogamous marriage? In any case, the loss of the husband placed the family in a more precarious situation since the primary food staple for the Israelites was the cereals, primarily wheat and barley. These demanded the arduous process of plowing and sowing, a process that required greater physical strength of the male. Even if the widow had control of the land, if she was not able to plow the land, it was essentially useless.

On the other hand, if the wife died first, perhaps in childbirth, the husband would likely have remarried. Otherwise, how would he have provided for the domestic needs? But that's beyond this study. One provision of the Old Testament law made is that if a man died and left his wife, here called the wife of the dead, without children, it's the levirate marriage.

It's in Deuteronomy 25, and we'll discuss it more in part four. Because the purpose was to provide an heir, levirate marriage would not seem to be a factor if the widow did have children. Or if the widow was past childbearing age, like Naomi.

Rather, the older widow with an adult son would be part of the extended family. If the child was underage, then the widow provisions in Leviticus might be viewed as a bridge until the child was old enough to take care of his mother. If the childless widow was past childbearing age, this is a different story.

The book of Ruth addresses some of these issues, and it's worth reviewing some key aspects of the legal issues involved. Naomi was a widow of Elimelech, but because of age, she would seem to be outside of the levirate marriage qualification. And consequently, she could not come under the widow provision, although the disposition of Elimelech's land might be an open question.

We don't have any evidence to address that. Ruth's case would be more complicated. Although debated, it does appear that her situation was an example of levirate marriage.

However, the actual widow of the landowner was Naomi, who had not only lost her husband but both sons. Further, Naomi's sons had married foreigners, Moabitesses. Ruth, who had been married to Machlan, one of Naomi's sons, was also a widow.

Despite the declaration in Deuteronomy 2:3 that no Moabite could enter the assembly of the Lord, Ruth's return to Bethlehem with Naomi apparently allowed unspecified legal rights. Tentatively, the land situation might be put together as follows. According to the English text in Ruth 4:3, Naomi was going to sell some of the land that belonged to Elimelech.

What this means is not clear. In any case, according to the text, for Naomi to get use of the land back, she had to, quote, redeem it. I say this is not clear because the land could not be sold.

Therefore, most scholars think that what we really are dealing with is a land lease, at least up to the time of Jubilee, which I study elsewhere. This would suggest that at Elimelech's widow, she had control of the land. In a practical sense, it really did not matter, since they arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Not time to sow. You can't get a crop in, which meant that the land was basically useless to Naomi until at least the following planting season, regardless of whether she would be able to till it. In a legal sense, however, it would appear that since Elimelech had sons, they had a right of inheritance and subsequent passing of the land on even though they were deceased.

Although neither son had children, both had married. Thus, by returning to the land, Ruth entered into the picture as the child-bearing age widow of a legitimate heir. This would seem to be the reason that in the complicated situation Boaz asserted to the unnamed relative that the land needed redemption, that is, needed a goel, a kinsman-redeemer, and that this kinsman, the goel, would also be required to marry Ruth.

The normal expectation would be that through levirate marriage, he would need to marry Naomi, but apparently, since she was beyond child-bearing age, the relative most likely assumed that no longer that to be the case, and then Boaz asserted that the requirement did devolve to Ruth, and then Boaz then agreed to buy the land. In the process, he acquired the estate of both Macklin and Killian and Ruth as a wife, quote, to raise up the name of the deceased in his inheritance, end quote. It is this last statement that most strongly indicates that the marriage was functionally a levirate marriage in that Boaz was agreeing that the inheritance would be a limbelex.

It is suggested that only after the birth of a son from Boaz and Ruth is Naomi praised by local residents because she now, "is not without a redeemer." In essence, these neighbors point out that one of the functions of this son was to be a sustainer of her old age. To this point, the assumption has been that the widow being addressed is an Israelite woman.

As we have seen, this presents problems. It presents problems with regard to the baseline situation, which presumes that the widow would be supported by her son or relative who inherited the family land. We also note that the separation of the domicile from the actual farmland produced the possibility that the widow could remain in the house of her husband regardless of the land status.

One alternative that is virtually ignored is the possibility that the almanah was not Israelite, nor was her late husband. Mayor Salzberger, in his study of labor in Israel, argues that the stranger or resident alien, the ger, was a descendant of a resident Canaanite who remained in the land after the conquest. While the Israelites were not allowed to sell their land, the same did not hold true for the Canaanite remnant.

Although they were later assimilated into the Israelite culture, that may become the case at that point. As such, Salzberger argues that the widow, the almanah, would be the widow of a landless Canaanite, which would put her in a truly economically precarious situation. If that were the case, it would explain why this person did not fit the expected community support criteria.

It would also make the admonition for the Israelites to provide the opportunity for economic support even more profound and perhaps even suggestive regarding the acceptance of Ruth when she took advantage of those opportunities and gleaned.

Orphans. Our second category is orphan. While the term orphan seems straightforward, the English translation has a different connotation than the Hebrew one. The English word orphan normally denotes a child who has lost both mother and father, which is the connotation that many English commentaries take. Consequently, while at first glance the situation seems obvious, there are several questions.

From a practical perspective, if an Israelite child has lost both parents, where did that child live? If he or she was taken in by relatives, why would those relatives not be expected to provide for the child instead of requiring the child to go out to glean and procure food? Since one of the provisions for orphans was gleaning, at what age was the child expected to perform that arduous work? Under these conditions, what hope did that child have in life should he or she ever reach adulthood? Given these questions, a deeper look is required. The Hebrew word translated orphan is really understood to be a child who lost his or her father, a connotation that gets lost in the translation. For example, the theological wordbook of the Old Testament translates yatam as orphan or fatherless, although its discussion does not address the difference, and it seems to view the term primarily as a child who has lost both parents.

Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon just provides the translation of orphan. At the end of its entry, though, it says, quote, In no case is it clear that both parents are dead, end of quote. From a sociological perspective, in the ancient Israelite culture, it seems fatherless, and orphan would carry much the same weight, specifically referring to a child who has no one to defend him or her.

Contextually, it is interesting that the orphan appears to be connected with the widow. They seem always to be tied together. This suggests a situation where a

woman has lost her spouse but had minor-aged children and was trying to raise them herself.

In light of earlier discussion, this woman would be technically not eligible for elaborate marriage because she has children who would be expected to care for her in her old age. Consequently, it is concluded that the consistent connection of orphans with widows indicates a single-parent family headed by the mother working together to gather food to survive. No, I don't have that.

What is not clear in the case of orphans is the issue of the land. It would seem that even if the father died, the land would remain in the family, likely under the legal control of the widow, such as suggested for Naomi. Zelophehad's daughters provide a precedence in Numbers 27.

Zelophehad had no son, and his daughters were concerned that their father would not lose his inheritance in the land, and so they came to Moses. The outcome was a directive from God that if a man dies and has no sons, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers.

And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. If his father has no brothers, then you shall give the inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, that would be an extended family, and he shall possess it. In a case like that, the expectation would have been that when the orphan reached adulthood, he or she would inherit the land and continue to work it.

However, if that was the case, then why would the orphan be gleaning? There may be evidence of how physical abilities affected matters such as gender roles within that culture. According to the Center for Economic Policy Research, historically, a factor in gender roles was the use of the plow. Plowing tilted soil requires significant upper body strength, grip strength, and a burst of power, which is needed to either pull the plow or control the animal that pulls it.

It may be then that a single woman, that is, a widow or a minor child, was not expected to have the physical ability to prepare the fields for planting, thus requiring other assistance. Later, we will see that one of the provisions for the widow and child orphan was gleaning or participating in the harvest. While certainly physically demanding, it did not require the same upper body strength that plowing required.

Deuteronomy 14:29 may contain another factor when it mentions the widow; sorry, it mentions that the orphan and the widow who are in your town are literally your gates. Thus, the two are mentioned together. There seems to corroborate the conclusions above that the reference is to the fatherless as opposed to true orphans, and the phrase in your town as opposed to in your land might anticipate a projected

future, a more complex culture where some elements of society no longer made their primary living by farming.

If that were the case, then the orphan and widow being addressed might be a family that had no land to farm. Our last Hebrew term is resident aliens. The glass group is called that of the ger, translated as stranger in the King James, sojourner in the ESV or the revised standard, the English Standard Version or the revised standard, or alien in American Standard or the New International Version.

The word means sojourner. The resident alien should be distinguished from a foreigner, a nakri or nakar, in that he or she would be residing in the land as opposed to visiting it. Hence the term resident alien.

Resident aliens have privileges and responsibilities beyond that of foreigners but fewer than those of natives. David Barker, in his book *Tight Fist or Open Hands*, expands on this stating, quote, the status of the resident alien is somewhere between that of the natives and the foreigners, and resident individual aliens may be incorporated into the community by becoming dependent members of an Israelite family, under the protection then of the household head, and he cites Exodus 20. That may explain the situation of Ruth.

In terms of ethnicity, the Old Testament presents several categories of individuals who permanently lived in the land but who were not descendants of Jacob. The first group was the mixed multitude that went up from Egypt in Exodus 12. As Douglas Stewart points out in his commentary, the verse in Exodus, quote, confirms that the Israelites of the Exodus and thereafter were actually a mixed people ethnically.

Other ethnic strands of the Exodus included Egyptians, as noted in Leviticus 24:10. Cushites in Numbers 12, Kenizzites in Joshua 14, and apparently others not named. While not descendants of Jacob, it would appear that these groups had been absorbed into ethnic tribes at Sinai. They then shared in the land division after the conquest, and thus, their descendants were included with the native Israelites in later citation.

For example, Caleb, described as a Kenizzites , also represents the tribe of Judah as part of the scouting party. He led with the other 11 to Kadesh Barnea in Numbers 13. Subsequently, in Joshua, he has a key role in Judah acquiring its land and, as such, seems to model assimilation.

A second group would be the tribes which dwelt in the land at the time of the conquest. The Old Testament clearly points out that contrary to the common perception, the nation of Israel did not eradicate all the inhabitants of the land during the conquest. The Gibeonites formed an alliance with Israel by deceit.

They were consigned to a position of servitude. Specifically, they were to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, both for the Israelites individually and for the altar of the Lord. God put them to work in His tabernacle as foreigners.

There are indications that some of them were intermarried with the Israelites. Other tribes did not form alliances but were not driven out. For example, Benjamin could not drive out the Jebusites, and they continued to dwell with the Israelites.

In fact, David bought the threshing floor from a Jebusite. Other Canaanite tribes, which are noted as remaining in the land of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, are noted in Judges 1:27-36. According to the early chapters of the Judges, these tribes were problematic for the nation subsequent to the conquest. Their ultimate fate is unknown, although we find hints of intermarriage, such as Samson marrying a Philistine woman in Judges 14.

It may be that the bulk of the 153,600 resident aliens that Solomon numbered and constricted to help build the temple descended from those tribes who occupied the land at the time of the conquest in 2 Chronicles 2. It seems likely that as Israel became more organized through the monarchy, these Canaanite tribes that remained became Hebrew speakers, intermarried, and ultimately lost their ethnic identity. That is, they were assimilated like the mixed multitude. While likely at least some of these resident aliens were absorbed religiously, this diverse population may help explain the mixed archaeological message regarding worship, as well as the tension seen throughout the Old Testament regarding other gods. With respect to the issue at hand, it would appear that these prior residents continued to live on the land that they had possessed prior to the conquest and, thus, generally did not meet the resident alien provisions.

If that were the case, it also raises the possibility that a Canaanite might have sold land to a non-Israelite, perhaps a later immigrant, but it seems much more likely that most later immigrants would have been landless. Those future immigrants compose our group. Noting the complexity of people movements throughout the ancient Near East, it is likely that a significant number of these immigrants entered the land throughout the history of the nation.

Torah guidelines prohibited Israelites from selling their land, so unless they were able to find work, they would be resident aliens who needed these welfare provisions. Two primary types of work are suggested. First, they might be either skilled craftsmen or merchants who could perform the jobs located in the larger communities or cities.

Second, they might work anywhere as hired hands. Subsistence farming was arduous work, and available manpower limited the amount of land a farmer could work. As

noted elsewhere, hiring individuals to help the farmer manage the land he possessed was a common practice in the ancient Near East.

Immigration is difficult in this context for several reasons. First of all, national boundaries were ambiguous, as was citizenship. People could move around rather freely, but at the same time, travel was difficult and generally on foot.

Likely the biggest issue would be communication when entering a region which spoke a different language. Second, life was essentially lived on a local level. This means that in most cases, acceptance was determined within the village.

An outsider who showed up in an Israelite village, whether he was an Israelite or an alien, would have to find work. It is likely that this means he would also find a place to stay. Likely, the migrant would be homeless for some time, but as noted above, it meant that he generally would be sleeping and foraging in the wild as opposed to begging on the street in the city.

Third, an alien would likely go someplace where he or she could find work in order to support himself or his family. Generally, that would involve manual labor. There would be a variety of reasons why these immigrants might not have work, such as they had just arrived, the farmer they worked for let them go, or there was a famine.

Whatever the reason, these social justice provisions provided the means by which they could survive. So, these three groups seem to have two points in common. First, they were subject to serious economic difficulties and all right, wrong button.

Ah, we just lost it. They were subject to serious economic difficulties. Second, these economic difficulties seem to stem from a lack of resources, which in that culture would primarily be agricultural land.

While we often view the situation as a lack of land, we noted that in the case of widows, the issue would have been the inability to till it. The same might be true of orphans. In the case of resident aliens, the lack of land seems to be a result of the prohibition against Israelites selling their inheritance.

While a resident alien might have worked as a laborer, this made him vulnerable to unemployment. Having explored what we have suggested, what we suggested might be social norms, and evaluated how these outlier groups lay outside the norms, we will now need to evaluate the directed provisions designated to serve as a safety net for outliers. But before we do that, we will want to find and discuss the concept of social justice in the abstract. And that'll be part three. Thank you.

This is Dr. Michael Harbin in his teaching on Social Justice for Social Outliers in

Ancient Israel. This is part two, Widows, Orphans, and Resident Aliens Defined.