

# **Elder Vernon Johson**

## **Numbers**

### **Timely Judgment of Evil Works of Men**

Deu. 25:1 "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. 2 And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. 3 Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee."

This, obviously, has nothing to do with the eternal judgment of sin, but was given to the judges of Israel to combat and judge wicked actions among the people. In order for a person to be beaten with forty stripes, he must first have been judged worthy of being beaten with that many stripes. The punishment was to fit the offense. Implied in the above was that a person could be beaten with fewer stripes if the offense was not as bad, but in no case was he to be beaten with more than forty stripes.

Thru tradition, the Jews had shortened the number to thirty nine stripes and would not give anyone more than thirty nine stripes. The thirty nine stripes was reserved for the most heinous of offenders according to their judgment.

In the eyes of the Pharisaical Jews, Paul's preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ constituted a most heinous offence as five times he was beaten with forty stripes save one: 2 Cor 11:24 "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one."