

1. 2 Timothy 3:16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” There is value in Dt. 12-14 for us!

2. We are midway through Moses’ 2nd farewell sermon:
 - A. Israel was a theocracy. God was her king and from Him alone all authority flowed.
 - B. The Promised Land was what God called their “rest”.
 - C. Major theme of Ch. 12: Destroy every vestige of the religious practices of the Canaanites.
 - 1) If you do not do this, it will ultimately destroy the nation of Israel.
 - 2) Centralize your worship where I (God) will tell you.
 - a. This is in contrast to the Canaanites who worshiped their gods on every “high hill”.
 - b. Our relationship with God depends on us accepting His solution to our “fallen” condition - we come to Him in His way, not ours.
 - c. The OT sacrificial system points to Jesus.
 - 3) In our pluralistic society, we must guard against that which would pollute the worship of God as He has instructed Christians to worship in His Word.
 - a. We no longer need to worship in one place, but we must access God through the finished work of Christ on the cross (John 14:6).
 - b. We must also Remember, Obey, and Teach - and not allow other “ways” to seep into our worship of God.

3. The emphasis of Chapter 13: God’s desire to preserve the purity of Israel’s worship
 - A. Do not listen to prophets or even family members who try to draw you away from the worship of the One True God.
 - B. Trying to turn others from the worship of God was such a serious offense in His eyes that the death penalty was ordered.

4. Chapter 14 - Dietary Laws - Acts 10 and 15 see these as having been fulfilled completely and are not obligatory for those who follow Jesus.

5. Tithing - In Chapter 12-14: A tithe was taken to the place of worship each year for the priests and Levites, widows, orphans and strangers, and for the communal meal celebrated before the presence of the Lord. Every 3rd year, the portion for the priests remained in the local place.

1. Deuteronomy 15: If Israel had completely followed the commandments of the Lord, there would have been no poverty in Israel.
 - A. Moses says here, “there should be no poor among you.”
 - B. But God’s blessing is conditional upon Israel’s obedience, so Moses acknowledges, “there will always be poor people in the land.”
 - C. A general principle: If we obey the commands of God, we can expect the blessing of God.
 - D. The New Testament also tells us to be generous to the poor and God will bless that generosity.
 - E. Debts were to be forgiven every 7 years. This broke the grinding cycle of poverty.
 - F. The motivation for generosity: “Remember, you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you.” Deuteronomy 15:15
 - G. Jesus told The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant about the man who was forgiven a large debt but would not forgive another what was owed to him (Matthew 18:21-35). Because God has so richly blessed us, we are obligated to be generous to others.

2. Much of what we read today we have already read elsewhere in the Pentateuch (the 5 books of Moses).

3. One different thing: The Feasts were to be celebrated at the place “God will choose as a dwelling for His name.”
 - A. Now they would be settled in their homeland and not be on the move all the time.
 - B. It would safeguard them from the pagan practices of the Canaanites.
 - C. It would keep them from excessive individualism and bind them together in corporate worship.
 - D. In the Book of Hebrews, we are told to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.” Worship for the community of faith is a corporate activity.
 - E. The feasts that were mentioned are the 3 feasts that everyone had to go to the central site of the Tabernacle to celebrate.

4. What we would call “Contempt of Court” was a capital offense.

5. The regulations for kings:
 - A. This is unique to the Book of Deuteronomy.
 - B. Israel was a theocracy - they were not supposed to have a king.
 - C. Moses is speaking prophetically. God knows that someday they will want to have a king just like the nations around them.
 - 1) A king should not accumulate horses (he will then rely on his own strength in battle and not on God).
 - 2) He should not accumulate wives (they will draw his heart away from God).
 - 3) He should not accumulate gold (it will make him proud).
 - a. Solomon majored in all 3.
 - i. God gave him the wisdom he asked for; he studied the Law of Moses; then he chose to ignore it.
 - ii. “Knowing and obeying God’s Word is fundamental to all true success.”

1. Deuteronomy 18-21 - additional principles to govern the priesthood and the office of prophet. Yesterday we had the regulations for kings. So Deuteronomy covers the 3 offices of prophet, priest and king.
 - A. Melchizedek was a king and a priest.
 - B. David was a king and a prophet.
 - C. Samuel was a prophet and a priest.
 - D. Jesus is prophet, priest and king - the only one in which all 3 offices come together.

2. Principles to govern the priesthood:
 - A. They have no land allotment like the other tribes - the Lord Himself is their inheritance.
 - B. They are to be given a portion of the offerings the Israelites bring to the Tabernacle.
 - C. If a Levite decides to move from another part of Israel to where the Ark and Tabernacle are located, he is to be given equal access to the ministry as befits his rule (not all Levites were priests).

3. The Israelites are warned not to adopt the “detestable” practices of the Canaanites, in this case, the occult and magical practices used to try to gain favor from their gods and guidance about the future.

4. The Israelites would get this guidance from the prophets of the Lord.
 - A. A prophet is a person who listens to God and then tells the people what God has said, more often about repentance than about the future.
 - B. The “test” for a real prophet is that what he says comes true.
 - C. A prophet who speaks “presumptuously” (God has not spoken to Him but He speaks in God’s name anyway, or he speaks in the name of other gods) must be put to death.

5. The Cities of Refuge:
 - A. There are 3 cities on the east side of the Jordan and 2 more are to be added in Canaan after they take possession of it.
 - B. Provision is made for 3 more, if they take more land through future conquests.
 - C. Expansion of the territory of the nation of Israel is contingent upon obedience.

6. It is hard for us to understand why some practices were tolerated - like the taking of captive wives, slavery, polygamy, and total war.

7. Deuteronomy 21:22: “If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day because anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse.” This verse added to the confusion the disciples felt when Jesus was hung on a “tree.” How could Jesus be under God’s curse?

8. Things we read today that are common parts of our language and culture:
 - A. Conviction needs to be on the basis of 2 or 3 witnesses.
 - B. The idea of a “double portion” inheritance
 - C. The practice of “washing your hands” of a crime
 - D. “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”
 - E. The concept of “manslaughter” as opposed to “murder”
 - F. The phrase, “Show no mercy”

1. Deuteronomy 22-25 - rules and regulations for maintaining order and holiness in the camp of the Israelites:

A. Things we may see as trivial” - the bird’s nest; the parapet around the roof of your house; clothing of mixed wool and linen; where to put the outhouse - but God’s care for His people protection and their health is extensive - He has thought of everything.

B. Limiting Laws - runaway slaves, treatment of laborers and the poor, divorce and remarriage - are God’s way of placing boundaries designed to protect the weak and defenseless from the harshness to which they might otherwise be exposed.

1) God tolerates divorce - He never condones them.

a. Malachi 2:16: God hates divorce. Matthew 19:8: God tolerates it “because of the hardness of men’s hearts,” but He puts limits on it.

b. In Deuteronomy 22:13 - concern for the woman’s reputation and protection

c. If there has been an intervening marriage, a divorced couple cannot remarry.

2) God tolerated slavery in the Old Testament, but never condoned it, and put limits on it.

a. Israelites cannot enslave fellow Israelites.

b. Indentured servitude must come to an end every 7th year.

c. Runaway slaves are to be treated kindly and protected.

3) Poverty as a condition is also to be limited.

a. Don’t keep a poor man’s cloak as collateral for a loan.

b. Leave wheat and olives not captured on the first pass of harvesting on the field for the poor to glean. (We saw this in operation in the Book of Ruth.)

c. The prohibition against interest on loans to fellow Israelites

C. Emphasis on sexual purity

1) Temple prostitution is strictly forbidden.

2) A woman is to be a virgin at the time of marriage.

3) Adultery gets the death penalty.

4) If a man rapes an unmarried, unbetrothed woman, he must marry her and pay the bride price of 50 shekels, and he can never divorce her.

5) A married woman raped in the country where her screams cannot be heard is not guilty and her rapist is stoned.

6) Incest is a capital offense.

D. The Levirate Laws are spelled out here.

1) The surviving brother of a childless widow is required to marry her. The first surviving son of this marriage will bear the name of the dead brother and carry on the family line. A way out is given to the man, but it shames him. (Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and Ruth and Boaz (Book of Ruth) illustrate this law.

E. Deuteronomy 25:4 - “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain.” Paul tells his readers (1 Timothy 5:18) this in a passage dealing with the need to care for the pastoral workers.

F. Corporal punishment - not more than 40 lashes - is in Chapter 25.

G. Tassels sewn on the 4 corners of clothing - Deuteronomy 22:12

H. Capital punishment, at the command of God, was not a problem for the ancient Israelites. But this was a theocracy - God always knew who was guilty and the priests got direct answers from God, so there were no mistakes.

1. The inheritance:

A. The Promised land was being given to Israel as its inheritance.

- 1) Because God, in His sovereign love, had adopted Israel as His own, they are the heirs to the inheritance He had sworn to give them.
- 2) Genesis 48 - the word is first used by Jacob as he ‘connected the dots’ from the promise made to Abram to himself and his heirs.
- 3) After 400 years, Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt to the Jordan River - but the inheritance slipped from their grasp due to their disobedience.
- 4) They had to wait 40 more years for the promised inheritance.

B. We too, have an inheritance. The NT often compares the church to the nation of Israel.

- 1) We have been adopted by God and made “joint heirs” with Jesus Christ.
- 2) We have an inheritance and a Kingdom (1 Peter 1) that can never “perish, spoil, or fade, which is kept in heaven for us.”
- 3) According to the Book of Hebrews, we are “pilgrims in search of a city whose builder and maker is God.”
- 4) We must “fix our eyes and hearts steadfastly on that Promised Land to be able to transverse the perilous road of this life in search of our final destination.”

C. When they come into their inheritance, they are to annually bring the first fruits and tithes to the centralized place of worship and offer them to God.

- 1) We are also to give with thanksgiving and generosity.
- 2) We are also to focus our attention also on the powerless, defenseless, vulnerable, disenfranchised and those dedicated to the service of God and His people.

D. Deuteronomy 26:5 - This recitation by the Israelites when bringing their offering is where the phrase “wandering Jew” originates.

- 1) Remember what God has done for you.
- 2) Be grateful to Him and spread the blessing - especially to those who are needy.

3. At the end of Chapter 26 the people accept the terms of the treaty and God accepts them as his “treasured possession.” The New Testament church is also referred to this way. Paul calls the church “the Israel of God.”

4. Chapter 27 - Instructions for the ratification of the covenant (treaty).

A. They were carried out in Joshua 8:30-35 shortly after they entered the Promised Land.

B. The stones with the words of the law written on them and the altar on Mt. Ebal are to remind the people that God’s law is the guideline for their life in the Promised Land.

C. Key verses: Deuteronomy 27:9,10: “Be still, O Israel, and listen. You have now become the people of the Lord your God. Obey the Lord your God and follow His commands and decrees I give you today.” The willingness or unwillingness to obey God is the best predictor of success or failure.

D. Moses and the elders of Israel command the Israelites to obey.

E. The stones and the altar on Mt. Ebal:

- 1) The curses (for disobedience) will be read from Mt. Ebal.
- 2) The blessings (for obedience) will be read from Mt. Gerizim.
- 3) We read this in Joshua 11. Six tribes will be on each mountain and the Levites stand in between.
- 4) The curses are spelled out, but the blessings are not. The last one: “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out.”