

Deuteronomy Chapter 26

- We are closing in on the end of the book of Deuteronomy, the 2nd law – and consequently the end of the Law itself, the Pentateuch and you folks have been troopers sticking with it.
 - Soon we'll be getting to the books of history, 12 books in all starting with Joshua – all of which is very exciting.
 - Moses will soon die, he will lie down somewhere on Mt. Nebo and Joshua will take over.
 - This is the beginning of the 3rd of Moses' teachings, with one more to go after this.
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V: 1 The purpose of this book in general is to prepare God's people to enter into the promised land.

V: 2-11 They are to take the first fruit of all the land and put it in a basket.

1. They are to take it to the Tabernacle and give it to the priest who shall place it before the altar.

Joshua 18:1 “And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.”

- The place that God would choose would be Shiloh, where the Tabernacle stood for around a century.

[Map / pictures:](#)

2. Then they were to confess and recite their testimony:
 - Abraham was a Syrian who begot Isaac, who begot Jacob – a Syrian, ready to perish – who went down to Egypt – sojourned there and became a nation.
 - They became slaves and were treated poorly.
 - But the Lord heard their voice, looked upon their affliction, the labor, and their oppression.
 - The Lord brought them forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, an outstretched arm, with great terribleness, with sign, and wonders.

3. They were to acknowledge that because of all these things now they could bring forth the first fruits of the land – which the Lord had given them.
- This time of tithing to the Lord was also to be a time of rejoicing and worship, a joyful time. This is what the NT teaches as well.

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

4. They were giving glory to God and thanking God for everything, they were to worship Him accordingly.
- And we’re to do the same thing:

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

- This is to be an acknowledgement of the place that God has in their country, in their lives.
- “He has fulfilled His word, He has kept His promise, we are dwelling in this land, it is a fruitful land, and now we bring the first fruits unto God.” And there they are to worship God.

Hebrews 13:15 “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

V: 12 A special tithe in the 3rd year was specifically to go towards the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow – that they might be filled. (Deut. 14:27-29)

V: 13-14 When they had brought or given all the consecrated things in their home unto the Lord and not used it for their personal use or pleasure, haven’t sacrificed it to the dead.

- There was a pagan practice in those days that they would take food and place it upon the graves or tombs of the dead while at the same time there were people starving who could just as easily have used that food which had been wasted in these pagan rituals.
- When they had given of the hallowed things to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows.
- Then they could say that they had hearkened unto the voice of the Lord, which they could only do after they had actually been obedient to His commandments and not forgotten them.

This is consistent with:

James 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

James 2:15-16 ¹⁵“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

- The work of God in our lives must always be translated in some way as the work of God through our lives.
- Our Christian faith and experience has no value unless we share it with others. We can't just sit back and think to ourselves “man, I am so blessed! God is so good to me!” and not share those blessings in some way with others.
- This would thwart or stymie the full purposes of God in our lives.
- It's our actions that truly define our faith.

James 2:17-18 ¹⁷“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. ¹⁸Yea, a man may say thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”

- When they had done these things, not forgetting the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows; then they could pray verse 15.

V: 15 Bless me!

The prayer of Jabez:

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 ⁹“And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, because I bare him with sorrow. ¹⁰And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”

V: 16 Moses is saying “you've been commanded to do these things – so do them with all your heart – enthusiastically!”

- When we're obedient to God's word it isn't just some vain religious observation it is an expression of love to our Master and Creator!

John 14:15 “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

- Keep and do God's commandments with all your heart and with all your soul!
Hold nothing back.

V: 17-19 You have declared that the Lord is your God and that you will keep His commandments and to hearken to his voice.

- God has declared that you are His special people, affirming that you should keep all His commandments.

“Peculiar” – different, distinguishable, identifiable as opposed to “weird”.

This is the distinction:

John 13:35 “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

- And that because of these things you will be lifted up above all the nations in both name and honor.
- That you may be a holy people unto the Lord thy God.

Deuteronomy Chapter 27

V: 1 Again, be obedient to the commandments of the Lord.

Proverbs 3:7-8 ⁷“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. ⁸It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.”

Later as Joshua is preparing the people for his departure:

Joshua 22:5 “But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

“... keep **“all”** the commandments which I command you this day.”

- We have to be careful that we don't confuse Biblical Christianity with “cultural Christianity” – which really is “compromised Christianity.”

Amos 8:11 “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

- Cultural Christianity is based upon people's opinions and interpretations relative to the culture around us. Hence if the culture disagrees with what the Bible says on a given subject it is either ignored or eliminated in the spirit of compromise

and a more tolerant less offensive understanding, making it more real, more relational, and more relative.

- All of this of course loses sight of the real goal in our Christianity, Biblical Christianity which is to be pleasing to God even if need be at the expense of our culture.
- Which is why we seek to be obedient to His word with all our heart, with all our strength, and with all our soul.

V: 2-8 When they cross over the Jordan entering into the promised land they are to do three things.

1. Build a monument to help them remember upon Mt. Ebal.
 2. Build an altar for sacrifice and worship.
 3. They are to offer both “burnt offerings and “peace offerings” upon that altar.
- The monument, consisting of large stones – referred to later as “Ebenezer stones”, they are to be covered in plaster. Then they are to write upon them “very plainly” all the words of this law, probably meaning the 10 commandments, as a reminder to them.
 - Why very plainly? Because the plain reading is generally the plain meaning – this is how we’re to interpret God’s word.
 - We all need these markers, these monuments in our lives reminding us of the monumental moments in our lives where the Lord changed us, where His promises came true and He showed Himself strong in our lives.

V: 4 Mt. Ebal, which means “stone”, is located very close to the geographic center of Israel. Half way between Dan and Beersheba, between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

- Mt. Ebal is just above the city of Shechem where Jesus met the woman at the well.
- On the opposite is Mt. Gerizim, these two relatively high mountains with the city of Shechem in the valley below.
- You’re in the heart of the land, and that is where the word of God is to be located and remembered.

Psalm 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.”

V: 5 Building an altar for sacrifice – unto the Lord.

- Stones that have not been changed or altered by mankind – just the way God made them.
- It comes from an understanding that we can't improve on what God has already done, that we have nothing good to offer.

Romans 7:18 “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing...”

V: 6-7 The altar being made of whole stones; they are to offer both the “burnt” offering of consecration / dedication of their lives to the Lord.

- And “peace” offerings of fellowship with God, thus sitting down and symbolically eating a meal right there with God. Part of the offering went to the altar and was fully consumed in the fire by the Lord, part went back to the person making the offering that sat with his family and friends and enjoyed communion with the Lord.
- Again, the altar being located or established in the heart of the country – worshipping from the heart.

John 4:23-24 “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.”

V: 8 Writing down the words very plainly – so that anyone can read and understand.

Nehemiah 8:7-8 “⁷... and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. ⁸So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

V: 9-10 Take heed, hearken – listen carefully with the intent of obeying:

- This is what the people of God do – they obey his commandments and statutes.

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”

1 John 3:7 “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.”

V: 11-13 Moses divides up the tribes that will stand either upon Mount Gerizim or Mt. Ebal to affirm either the blessings or the cursing. Moses and the Levites would be at the bottom, calling out the curses.

Mt. Gerizim: “Cut off ones” 2849’ (Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, Benjamin) Blessing.

Mt. Ebal: “Stone” “Bare Mountain” “Bald” 3,083’ (Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun Dan, Naphtali) Cursing.

- Mt. Ebal, the mount of “cursing” – also the mount where the altar was built, where the blood was shed – the shed blood that allowed them to have fellowship with God.

V: 14 Imagine this scene: Moses and the Levites calling out, then the tribes affirming.

- The acoustics in this area are ideally suited to this, voices can be heard of to 3 miles away.

V: 15-26 12 cursing, each answered in turn by the people below with “Amen!”

- Most are repeats of previous admonitions or declarations.

V: 15 Cursed be the man that makes any graven images – idolatry, an abomination to the Lord. A repeat of the 1st & 2nd commandments.

V: 16 Cursed is he that makes fun of his parents. (5th commandment)

V: 17 Cursed is he that moves property lines. (Deuteronomy 19:14)

V: 18 Cursed is he that leads the blind astray – dirty trick. (Leviticus 19:14)

- I believe this also applies to those false teachers that lead many astray through false religion.

V: 19 Cursed is he that perverts judgment, taking advantage of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. (Exodus 22:21-22)

V: 20-23 Dealing with sexual sins; cursed is he that is involved with any kind of incest; mother, step mom, mother in law, sister, or ½ sister – anyone involved in bestiality. (Leviticus 18-19)

V: 24-25 Dealing with the mafia, cursed is he that secretly harms his neighbor or is paid to kill anyone

V: 26 Cursed is anyone that doesn’t confirm these words, doesn’t agree with these words and affirm them.

Psalm 19:7 “The Law of the Lord is perfect....”

- It doesn’t need to be changed, nothing is to be taken away.

Deuteronomy 4:2 “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it...”

Responsive reading of the last 12 verses.