

Deuteronomy ch 16-17

Now we're not going to spend a whole lot of time in ch 16 because it primarily deals with or reviews the fact that they were to keep at least 3 primary feasts each yr and we've went over each one of them in detail as we studied Exodus and Leviticus. Just know that each one of them was a foreshadowing of the person and work of Jesus Christ because as the bible says, in the volume of the book it is written of Him. And Paul the apostle told us in Col 2:16-17 "*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*" Now if it intrigues you as to how these feasts are a foreshadowing of the person and work of Jesus Christ then I'd encourage you just to get the tapes of those studies and find out. But we read in vs 1

Vs1

Abib would be right around our month of April and the Lord started their calendar with this month and recognized it as their 1st month because it was during this month that He delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. And to see how this all went down you need to read Exodus ch 12, and there you'll read of how the Lord delivered the children of Israel from Egypt. To make it quick He had been plaguing Egypt by the hand of Moses and the Pharaoh was refusing to let them go and so God said to Moses I want you to have each household take a lamb. And it needs to be without spot or blemish and on the 14th day of the month kill it at twilight and take some of its blood and put it on the 2 doorposts and lintel of the door of your homes. Roast the thing, eat it and what you don't eat burn, don't let any of it remain and the blood shall be a sign on your home and whenever I see the blood, I'll pass over you. And whomever's house isn't "sealed" by the blood, in all of Egypt, the 1st born of that house will die. And after that the Pharaoh will let you go, so the wage that was coming was death and it was going to come upon everyone and the only thing that would spare you the wage of death was to have the blood of the Lamb applied to your home. The typology is obvious, the wages of sin is death and it's coming upon everyone, and the only thing that will spare us that wage isn't good works or being good moral people. But only the blood of Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God) that's been shed being applied to the doorposts and lintel of your heart by faith will exempt you from that penalty. And so as a memorial of that event God commanded them to keep the Passover the same time every year to commemorate His delivering them and making a nation out of them under Himself.

Vs2-4

And of course leaven being a type of sin in the scriptures speaks of the sinless nature of Jesus and how God desires us to be pure as well and without leaven so to speak.

Vs5-8

So they couldn't keep the Passover just anywhere they wanted it was mandatory that they travel to Jerusalem to keep it.

Vs9-10

The feast of weeks is also known as Pentecost, they would count 7 weeks which is 49 days and then on the next day which would be the 50th day and the Greek word for 50 is "*pentecoste*" and so that's how it became known as the feast of Pentecost. And it was to be a feast of Joy and thanksgiving and it was to be a celebration of all that God had done for them and given them.

And they were to give an offering to the Lord, this wasn't a tithe it was a freewill offering to the Lord above and beyond the tithe to show appreciation and thanksgiving for how abundantly He had blessed them. And of course the NT counterpart would seem to be what we quoted last week, 1 Cor 16:2 "*On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper.*" We are to give in accordance with the means that God has blessed us, and not out of a motive of guilt or pressure because God loves a cheerful willing giver, notice vs 11.

Vs11-12

And it's significant that the feast day that celebrated God's graciousness and His blessing upon the people, how He had given them so much, was the day that God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit just continuing to bless His people, the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost.

Vs13-15

Notice the (almost) redundant command to rejoice in what they gave and in their feast and time spent in worship and adoration of the Lord. God doesn't want any long faced griping givers, be it of their time, their energies or abilities, money, or whatever. God wants you to do or give whatever it is that you do or give out of a sense of love for Him and with joy in your heart. That's why Paul said, "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" Your giving to God should always be of a freewill choice with a rejoicing heart. And if you can't give that way then just be honest with God about that and ask Him to deal with you in your heart about that and meanwhile just don't give if you don't want to. Because I would rather you give whatever it is, be it again your time or anything for that matter, and be blessed in and through it rather than give out of pressure or constraint and God not honor it anyway. Because if you can give with the right frame of heart, then God honors that, if you can't it just burns like chaff anyway so you may as well keep it.

Vs16-17

Again going back to vs 10 let each man give as he so prospers.

Vs18-19

I think that speaks for itself.

Vs20-22

God hates images made in any way to be a likeness of Him. And sure this may've been several thousand years ago but God has said, "*I am the LORD, I do not change.*" And so if He hated images then, He no doubt hates images now, and He's declared here that there's not to be any images set up near His altar or in worship or adoration of Him. I believe that an image is always a sign of a deteriorating spiritual state. Because it serves to remind me of the presence of God, and so whenever I need a reminder, it really testifies that I have lost something vital of that awareness and consciousness of God. And rather than as Paul said "*for in Him we live and move and have our being.*" In other words there's that constant awareness of the presence of God about me and with in me that keep me in check and stirs me on to good works and all. I've instead somehow lost that conscience-ness of God and so I go buy this plaque or "carve out this image" so that I'll have this constant reminder of the presence of God. And so God hates images, you say but Jeff what does that do for the Roman Catholic church, or for that matter any of these churches that have all these images strewn all about them?

I have no idea, except to say that that would be in direct disobedience to the word of God. I'm not insinuating that it's a salvational issue or the unpardonable sin, but I would be care to in anyway knowingly violate the word of God.

Ch 17

Vs1

So in keeping with the theme of giving that God is instructing them on, the thing that He's seeking to get across to them here is that they weren't to be giving their castoffs to the Lord. They weren't to be giving an ox or a bull or a lamb that had blemishes or defects.

God really isn't honored when we give to Him our castoffs, those things that really don't mean anything to us or would no longer serve any purpose for us and so we decide to give them to God. And I believe it's mainly just a lack of discipleship but many times I find people come to this point where they have something that's old and rickety. And so they go out and buy something new to replace it and they know that no one in their right mind would ever actually pay for something in its shape. And so they go to the Pastor or someone and say "well, I was just going to throw this thing away but I thought I might see if the church wants it?" And in essence what they're doing is offering to God they're cast-offs something that's of no worth or value to them. I've mentioned it before; you recall when David was going to purchase the threshing floor of Ornan to place an altar on that spot. And Ornan was so overwhelmed that the king of Israel would want anything of his said, hey I'd be honored just to give it to you and anything else you want.

And David said no, I'll buy it at full price because I refuse to offer to the Lord, or give unto the Lord that which costs me nothing. I want to give God of the finest I have, that, which is of value to me, and what was God's estimation of David? There's a man after MY own heart, that's what God said about David, that he was a man after His own heart and He was honored by David's offering unto Him because it was something of value to David, it meant something to David and by that God was honored. God says here that those things offered with blemishes and defects to Him were an abomination. And when you come the last book of the O.T the book of Malachi you find that right off the bat they had begun to do just this, offer the blind and lame and maimed sacrifices to God. And He charges it against them, He says hey would you give these animals as gifts to your governor, then why are you giving them to me, it's an abomination.

Vs2-5

So idolatry or really the worship of anything other than the one true Living God which is that same thing as idolatry was a capital offense and punished by death. Again because God was desiring to keep them a pure nation and a light to the world around them, showing them what it meant to worship the true and living God.

Vs6-7

So you couldn't just go out because you had a beef with your neighbor and have him killed by accusing him of idolatry. 1 witness wasn't enough there had to be 2 or 3; they were basically innocent until proven guilty. And if they were proven guilty then the accuser had to throw the 1st stone and then the people would join in, in approval of the fact that they abhorred idolatry. But should the person later be vindicated then the person who accused them and through the 1st stone would in essence be guilty of murder and stoned themselves. So I doubt that there were too many spur of the moment charges and things were thoroughly investigated before that 1st stone was thrown lest you wind up on the receiving end of all that yourself.

Vs8-13

So if an issue came up that was too difficult to discern what to do with it. You had to travel to Jerusalem and present the facts to the priests and this wasn't a court of appeals or anything else, the buck stopped right there. And whatever they decided you did and if you thought you got the raw end of the stick and refused to submit to his decision that wasn't a problem you were just killed.

Now as we get to vs 14 we see God's anticipation of future deterioration of the Land, because God's intention was for Israel to be a theocracy, a nation governed by God. Unlike any other nation of the world, theirs was to be unique in that it was to be ruled over by God Himself. But God knew that one day these people would insist upon a king to rule over them so that they could be like other nations.

And it's interesting that even though it would be some 400 yrs after this point before any King would arise in their nation, yet God made preparations for it in the law.

Vs14-17

Now Solomon failed in all 3 points, he multiplied horses to himself and since Egypt bred the finest horses guess where he got his from. Egypt, and they were told not to multiply wives unto themselves lest their hearts be turned from God. I've got a secret for you, it doesn't take multiple wives to steer a husband away from the Lord, I've seen it happen over and over again and believe me when I tell you that it only takes one. Now I don't mean anything offensive to you ladies, but I am going to let you in on another little secret if you haven't figured it out already. Your influence over your husband is tremendous and it's not an impossible thing to steer him in the direction you want to go, as a matter of fact in many cases it's probably quit simple. And you need to know that and be aware of the awesome accountability that's to be found in that sway of influence and what it is that you're influencing him towards. Be it in godliness or why do we always have to go to church I'm tired tonight and so he says fine if you don't want to go we'll stay home. Now I'm not taking away from the man's position in the home, but know that your influence is very real and very strong nonetheless and consider that before you say what you say or do what you do.

Solomon multiplied wives to himself by the multitudes, believers and non-believers alike. And what do we read of Solomon in 1 Kings ch 11: "*For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.*" And we all know of the vast wealth that he multiplied unto himself and so all of these warnings were violated by Solomon. And exactly what God said would happen in light of those things happened, God knows what He's talking about and He's not into wasting His breath and so we shouldn't think that He issues needless warnings. But again many times like Peter we think we know better than God does when it comes to our lives, that may be true for them but not for me, and the results of that mindset is tragic.

Vs18-20

Wouldn't it be great if we had a president that wrote out his own copy of the word of God and meditated in it day and night. David spoke of his delight being in the law of the Lord and how he meditated in it day and night, again a man after Gods own heart, and may we learn what it means to be a people and a congregation after Gods own heart.