

Dueteronomy ch 20

Ch 20 moves us on a little bit, we've been dealing with the principals of giving and all as over the last several ch God has been instructing them in that particular act of worship. And How it was to be integrated into the various feasts, and what portions of their sacrifices were to be given to the priests and things of this nature. God has laid out the law concerning the kings that they would one day have rule over them and given the instruction on how they were to conduct themselves. And They were to write out a copy of the word of God for themselves and be careful to observe it all the days of their lives. They were to apply the word of God practically not only to their own lives but they were to exercise it over the nation as a whole. We seen in ch 18 the fact that they weren't to learn the customs and be imitators of the world around them in their various abominable practices. Such as sorcery or witchcraft, looking to supernatural mediums for direction such as the psychic networks or the tarot card readings and all but rather they were to seek direction from the word of God. And God said that He would raise up for them a prophet (like Moses) who would speak His word to the people and since the words that the prophet would speak would be the word of God, then the people were obligated to obey it and if they didn't it would be required of them in judgment. And We pointed out how the ultimate fulfillment of that was found in the person of Jesus Christ who was mighty not only in word but in deed as well, and spoke the word of God to the people and those who refuse to heed the words of Jesus it will be required of them in judgment. But as far as the direct text was concerned God also gave them tools of discernment so that they would recognize the false prophet, #1 if they sought to lead them away from the Lord, then he wasn't sent from God. #2 If the thing he shared didn't come to pass, he wasn't sent from God and the penalty for being a false prophet was death, and 3rdly if the prophet sought to make merchandise of the people of God and rip them off, Peter tells us that's one of the marks of a false teacher. Ch 19 showed us the cities of refuge that a manslayer could flee to, to await a fair trial if in fact someone had died at his hands but it was an accident. And If that were the case he would be vindicated of the crime and the man who had been killed, his avenger of blood would be prohibited from carrying out judgment upon the manslayer by killing him as well. But the manslayer would have to live in that city as long as the current high priest was alive, if he left earlier (which he was free to do) then the slain man's kinsman redeemer could kill him with out penalty. Now after the high priest died, he could go free with out worry, but until then he had to remain in the city if he desired to sleep in peace, knowing that he was protected. We wound up last week speaking briefly about capital punishment and how God desired to keep the nation of Israel pure of those things or those people who would infect them as a nation. And So if someone had committed a crime worthy of death and their was more than one witness to the crime, then God had capital punishment carried out upon them. And If it was learned in the trial that the person was being accused by false witnesses then what ever penalty they were seeking to have laid upon the innocent party was to be laid on them, and if it was death then they were to be killed themselves.

Vs20-21

Now in ch he begins to speak of the principles and the ways that they were to conduct warfare.

Vs1

Now you have to remember that the children of Israel, for all intents and purposes weren't a war-faring people, they were slaves who were set free from the bondage of Egypt by the power of God. And So certainly they would have certain fears concerning going into battle, because they didn't have horses and chariots and all of the modern weaponry of that time. When you stepped up to a battleground in that day and seen a seemingly endless row of chariots in front of you, it would be the equivalent of stepping into an infantry of tanks with a bayonet. And So you can see why they might get intimidated or be fearful concerning these other nations who were much farther advanced in their military tactics and all as they stepped out onto the field with more foot soldiers, all these chariots and horses. But the Lord is saying here, now don't be afraid when you see these things, because it's not about how strong you are anyway, you're not going to win the war or move forward taking ground, by power or by might, but by My Spirit says the Lord. God says I'm going to be with you and when it appears to be a circumstance that appears to be more than you then that's even better because then you're not going to be confused as to who's done the work. You see if it's not more than you, then you don't need God, and so God delights in what would be to you and me overwhelming circumstances or impossible odds. Because then He alone gets the glory as He brings about victory in your life, and when you're in over your head God says I don't want you to be afraid, why, because I, the Lord you God am with you. David said, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me.*" The conscious awareness of the presence of God is the most fear-dispensing thing in the world, when there's a frightening situation that I'm facing. Now too often we forget that God is with us and that's when we get scared, but its always so comforting when you're confronted with a seemingly frightening or difficult situation to remember that God is with us. Why, because if God be for us, who can be against us Prov 29:25 "*The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*" Ps 27:1 *The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?* Again Ps 56:11 "*In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*"

Vs2-4

That vs should be underlined in your bible, (read vs 3 "do not...of your enemies, why?) Vs4 Notice the repetition in the command not to be afraid but to trust in the Lord, oh how this needs to be embedded deep with in our hearts.

Vs5-9

So we see in vs 3 that it was the priests responsibility to encourage the men by God's word, reminding them that He was going before them and that they weren't to be afraid of their enemies. And It was the officers responsibility to ensure the fact that the army that they took into battle were the most qualified and well suited for the job. But the ones who were the most qualified weren't necessarily those who were the most gifted in battle, but rather they were the one's who were the most dedicated to the Lord and free from fear and distraction, and focused on the calling at hand. And Those are always the best type of people to have on your team, those who trust in the Lord and are dedicated to the Lord and focused on Him believing Him for the victory concerning the battle before you.

So if you were building a new home and your mind was preoccupied with all that that entails then you weren't going to be able to give 100% to the battle so it's best if you just go home. If you've been planting a vineyard and haven't reaped it yet, all you're going to be thinking is man I hope I don't die out there I've worked awful hard and I'd sure hate to miss out on the fruits of my labor, I mean what was the point, if I die it was all in vain. You're preoccupied go home, if you're engaged to a little lady and you haven't enjoyed marriage with her and a relationship with her, then you're sure not going to be all together on the battle field. All you're going to be able to think about is that gal back home and while your day dreaming you're probably going to get a sword through the chest or something so you go home. And Finally if you're just flat out scared, then you go home to because fear in the midst of a tensive situation has a tendency to be contagious. And So if you're already skittish going into something and in the middle of it you tuck tail and run and leave your buddy there in the middle of the battle with the odds now even more against him. Odds are he's going to take off right behind you and then one thing leads to another and you have a massive retreat. God doesn't want that, He wants people who are of the mind set that if we enter this battle it's to win and there's neither retreat nor surrender, we're moving forward until we win this battle. And So all you scaredy cats can go home, now you recall that God told Gideon to do this, he had a battalion of 32,000 men which seems pretty good, that' s nothing to scoff at. But he was up against an army of Midianites that numbered 135,000, which after you figure the math is about 4.2 or so to 1. But God said I think the odds favor you a bit too much here Gideon so tell your men that whoever is afraid, they need to go home. 22,000 men packed their bags and left. Now it's 13.5 men to 1, and you know the story that was too many as well and when God was finally through with them there was only 300 men left in Gideon's army. Making it 450 to 1 and God said now that's a number I can work with and believe me when I tell you that God alone got the glory for that impossible victory, but back to our text, if you were scared you went home.

So that by the time that God was finished chopping away at the men who were equipped and ready to go, you had a group of guys there who were pretty focused and ready to fight. They were ready to go, and didn't have some girlfriend that they were engaged to, to distract them or anything, they weren't going to panic in the midst of the battle or anything and so there was really a lot of wisdom in the selection process. The group of guys you were left with were quality fighting men.

Vs10-14

I like the confidence we see in vs 13 it wasn't and "if the Lord gives you the city", it was "when" the Lord gives you the city, they could be assured of the victory if it was a battle that God had instigated and instructed them to be involved in. And if God's leading your life, you can be assured that He's going to bring victory to your life as long as He's instructed you to be involved in that which you're involved in. Now I'm not saying that every missionary that's ever lost their lives or things like that have been out of God's will, I don't believe that. But God will have the victory over whatever it is that He puts His hand to sometimes we get to experience it on this side of eternity, sometimes we don't see it here and now, but God will be victorious that much you can count on. But when they approached a city, they were to give them the option to surrender, if they did, great they became their servants. But if they didn't they were to kill all of the men and then the women and children would be grafted into their nation as servants.

Vs15

In other words this is the way they were to deal with the nation who weren't directly in the land of Canaan, but as for those people God ordered the total eradication of them

Vs16-18

And we've spoken in the past about how it would've only been a matter of time before they destroyed themselves anyway with all the incestuous and bestiality type of practices and child sacrifice that was going on in their culture just to name a few. And So like a rabid dog headed for a playground of children, it's going to die anyway, but if you stand by a let that dog head into that playground and begin to bite innocent defenseless children then in reality you're responsible for allowing that to happen. Even so these nations were like rabid dogs and rather than let His innocent children get infected by their practices that were already killing them, He ordered the total eradication of these people. Now they didn't totally eradicate them as God commanded and so ultimately they did do according to all of their abominations and sinned against God and were punished for their wickedness as well. But God instructed them to get rid of the people so that that wouldn't happen; they just didn't do it and suffered the ramifications of disobeying the word of God accordingly.

Vs19-20

So don't use the fruit trees to build weapons or whatever but use the oaks and various trees that they couldn't use for food. It wouldn't make much sense to destroy the enemies' land in this case because they were going to inherit it. So just cut down trees that won't feed you until that city is subdued and then you don't need to cut down the trees anymore anyway, just for the sake of cutting them down.

Ch 21

Vs1-9

So if there was a dead body found in a field and no one knew who killed that person, then the elders and judges were to go out and measure to determine which city he was closest to and that city was responsible for the death whether the murderer was in that city or not. And So they would take a heifer that had never been worked down to a valley that had never been sown and break the neck of the heifer signifying that the crime was worthy of death and this would basically act as a sacrifice for that sin so that the city might be atoned for. And Then the priests would come down and they would all wash their hands over the dead heifer and they would all swear that they knew nothing about it and that they were innocent of the blood of the dead man. And Then atonement would be imputed to them and their land.

Vs10-12

Possibly to signify her being cut off from her former life, though it doesn't say for sure why they had them do this.

Vs13-14

So if after you took this gal for your wife and maybe she refused to convert to his faith or for whatever reason, he doesn't list for us reasons for putting her away here, but he could set her free. He couldn't sell her even though she had been a captive and that's what they usually did, but due to the fact that he had made her his wife, he could put her away but he couldn't sell her as a slave.

Vs15-17

The bible no where condones polygamy and any where you see it there winds up being problems, in the beginning God set forth His desire, that being one man and one woman, if He endorsed polygamy He'd have created 1 man and 10 women, but He didn't. And So if you married more than one woman and the lesser loved woman had your 1st born son then he got all the rights of the 1st born son whether you liked it or not. You shouldn't have married more than one woman if you didn't want to take that chance.

Vs18-21

So if you had a child who was consistently rebellious, refused to obey, you'd done everything you could possibly think of to cause them to understand and correct that child. (Now we're obviously not talking about 2yr olds here) but this child refused to do anything but rebel, and nothing you did changed that. Then they were in extreme violation of the 5th commandment, not honoring their mother or their father and so they were to be brought to the town elders and the facts were to be laid out and then you weren't allowed to beat your child to death or anything like that. But they would take that child (again the age factor I'm not certain of, it probably varied somewhat) mostly teenagers I'm sure. But the men of the city would carry out the death penalty and they would be stoned; now we don't have a record of this ever happening, but kids just be thankful today that you're under grace and not law.

Vs22-23

Now this has special significance to us in regards to this last portion "he who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God." In the book of Gal Paul tells us that it's Christ who had become a curse for us for it is written, "*cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.*" Gal 3:13. And Paul was referring to this vs right here in Duet. Taking upon Himself the curse of God of our behalf. And in every way that man was cursed of God due to the fall, Jesus Christ made atonement for it, due to the curse Adam was told that thorns would be brought forth out of the earth. Thorns were a result of the curse, what was it that was placed upon the head of Jesus? A crown of *thorns* bearing the curse upon Himself, man was told that he would get his bread by the sweat of his brow. In the Garden of Gethsemane the bible tells us that Jesus "sweat" as it were great drops of blood, again bearing another aspect of the curse in His own body, of course pain was a part of the curse, and we needn't expound on the pain that Jesus suffered. Enmity between Satan and man was another aspect of the curse, and of course when Satan tempted Jesus He experienced this. And Then ultimately separation from God was part of the curse, and when Jesus was on the cross, being accursed of God as He hung on that tree having our sin laid upon Him, He cried out My God My God why have you forsaken Me, experiencing for the 1st time in His earthly life separation from God the Father. So every curse that was laid upon man Jesus bore in His own body for you and me and he became accursed of God so that we might become the redeemed of God.