

Deuteronomy 13-16

INTRODUCTION

Tonight, we're going to be approaching our study a bit differently.

Because this is the night we want to spend in more prayer, we're going to be doing a lot more survey & summary of the text than we usually do.

We're in that section of Deuteronomy where Moses repeats instructions for things we've already covered.

But we'll be breaking in along the way to apply what we're studying by praying.

Now, here's what we're going to do . . .

At certain points, I'll stop, & ask for 2 or 3 people who feel led, to stand & lead us in prayer over what we've just covered.

The goal of corporate prayer is agreement. In order to cultivate agreement, follow these guidelines –

- 1) Speak loudly & clearly
- 2) Be specific
- 3) Pray, don't preach
- 4) Be brief

II. MOSES' SECOND DISCOURSE Chs. 5–28

G. Warnings Chs. 13-14:21

1. Punishment of False Prophets & Idolaters Ch. 13

a. vs. 1-5 • dealing with false prophets

¹“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, & he gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘& let us serve them,’ ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart & with all your soul.

God warns them *not* to give credence to or go running off after every so-called prophet or miracle worker, just because they predict the future or are able to work miracles.

Their message must be consistent with the Word of God already delivered through Moses.

They must be faithful in their call to follow Yahweh.

The supernatural realm is real – & miracles can be worked by both the agents of God & the agents of satan.

When Moses stood before Pharaoh & worked the first plagues, Pharaoh's sorcerers were able to duplicate them.

In 2 Thess 2, we read that the last days will see an abundance of lying signs & wonders.

The Apostle Paul warns the Corinthians that since satan masquerades as an angel of light, it's not surprising that his servants will appear as ministers of

righteousness – but they are corrupt, false, deceits! [2 Cor. 11:12-15]
There are many so-called ministers today who are going all over the place staging huge rallies in which miracles of healings are in full display, & many who watch think that this must surely be the hand of God, so when the message is given, they swallow it hook, line, & *stinker!*

Moses gives an important warning here to God's people – don't be fooled by the mere supernatural. Not all that 's miraculous comes from God.

The crucial issue is: What is the bottom line?

To what **END** does the message lead the hearer?

It has to be greater love for & obedience to God as He has revealed Himself

IN THE WORD!

PRAYER BREAK

⁴You shall walk after the LORD [Yahweh] your God & fear Him,
Not Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech, or any of the other idols.
**and keep His commandments & obey His voice; you shall serve Him
& hold fast to Him. ⁵But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall
be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away
from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt &
redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way
in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall
put away the evil from your midst.**

The penalty for being a false prophet was death.

It was this passage which drove the thinking of the Inquisition & even the Reformers who executed those they found to be heretics.

b. vs. 6-11 • dealing with apostate relatives

In vs. 6-11 God expands the ban on apostasy even to the members of one's family.

If they went apostate & called for others to worship other gods, they were to be stoned to death.

c. vs. 12-18 • dealing with apostate cities

Then in vs. 12-18 Moses speaks of an entire city that decided to forsake Yahweh to worship an idol.

A careful & complete investigation was to be done to make sure the people of the city were indeed guilty, & if so, the site was to be utterly demolished & left as a perpetual monument of judgment.

2. Don't "ape" cultural fashions Ch. 14:1-2

¹"You are the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. ²For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, & the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Among the Canaanites, it was a common practice to disfigure one's self when a relative or loved one died.

They would gash their flesh in a visible place so that ever after they would bear

the mark of their loss.

Another practice was to shave off *all facial hair* from the ears forward. These people put little stock in the afterlife so the only time a person had any significance was in *this life*.

It meant something to someone if they believed that after they were gone, their loss would be commemorated by his/her loved ones bearing continuing reminders of them.

God told Israel they weren't to follow this bereavement custom.

And the reason why is because they were to have a totally *different view* of the afterlife.

Real life didn't *end* with death; it *began* because as His people they would enter the glory of heaven which was their real home.

This speaks to us in 2 ways.

First – the approach of the Christian to the death of a loved one who died in faith ought to be *very different* from those who have no hope.

Sure we mourn our loss, but that sorrow is ultimately overcome by our confidence in Christ & the resurrection.

Our main bereavement practices center on the *funeral* of a loved one.

For the Christian, these ought not be maudlin times of profuse sorrow, but bittersweet & sober celebrations of our loved one's entrance into glory.

Second – It isn't just our bereavement customs we ought to consider as it relates to aping the world's fashions.

For not only do we define death differently than the lost – we ought to live life differently.

Everything from the clothes we wear, to the cars we drive & the neighborhoods we live in ought to be reflections of a decision-making process that is first and most concerned with the glory of God.

PRAYER BREAK

3. A holy diet Ch. 14:3–21

In Vs. 3-21 Moses repeats the list of animals that were both allowed & prohibited in their diet.

H. Tithing Ch. 14:22–29

We'll be covering these vs. Sunday, so I'll leave further comment till then, but I want to say that as I was working over this section, I saw something really interesting.

I. Treatment of Debtors & Slaves Ch. 15:1-18

We covered vs. 1-11 2 Sunday's ago so we'll pass over that tonight.

In vs. 12-14, Moses extends the idea of discharging debts found in vs. 1-11 to the *release of slaves*.

12 “If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you & serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. ¹³ & when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; ¹⁴ you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, & from your winepress.

From what the LORD has blessed you with, you shall give to him.

As per the law of the Sabbath, they were to release all their Jewish servants in the 7th year.

When they let them go, they were to make sure they went out with enough resources to not *just survive*, but to *thrive*.

What would be the point of giving a slave his freedom if he didn't have the means to secure that freedom & stay free?

15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, & the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.

This is a crucial statement, the principle of which we need to take to heart tonight. God tells them to let go the slave, & to send them forth with *blessing*.

In other words, they were to show *compassion* to those in bondage, not getting uppity about their own freedom, but remembering well their own desperate condition before God rescued them.

All too often, we who've been delivered from bondage to sin & death act as though we've *always* led morally spotless lives.

We look down righteous noses at those still in bondage, & instead of seeing them as slaves of sin God wants to free, *we condemn them*.

What's the difference between the worst sinner & the holiest saint?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What we must remember is that He shed that blood, not just for us, but for all, including that sinner we can so easily despise.

PRAYER BREAK

16 And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you & your house, since he prospers with you, ¹⁷ then you shall take an awl & thrust *it* through his ear to the door, & he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. ¹⁸ It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

J. Offering the Firstborn 15:19-23

In vs. 19-23 Moses tells them they are to give the firstborn of their flocks to God.

The only exception is if it was somehow blemished.

K. Various Rules Ch. 16-17

In vs. 1-17 Moses tells the people once they settle in Canaan, they were to make a pilgrimage 3 times a year to the place God would chose as the location of the tabernacle.

These pilgrimages were to celebrate 3 festivals:

1. The Passover 16:1-8

A celebration of their redemption from bondage in Egypt.

2. The Feast of Weeks 16:9-12

AKA, Pentecost, this was a harvest celebration – observed in *anticipation* of the coming harvest.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles 16:13-17

This festival was a week long commemoration of the Journey to the Promised land & how God had protected & provided for them the entire 40 years.

4. Judge righteously 16:18-20

18 “You shall appoint judges & officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, & they shall judge the people with just judgment.

The city gate was the place where the city leaders & judges sat.

They didn’t have courts buildings as we do; the place of authority was the gate, because the gate was a symbol of authority.

The gatekeepers were the ones who said who could & couldn’t enter the city.

Moses here provides for a civil legal system to be established in Israel.

Then he moves to make sure justice isn’t corrupted . . .

19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise & twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰ You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live & inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Moses says bribes weren’t to be tolerated because they can affect the decisions of otherwise good men.

A favor can cause even a wise man to forsake wisdom.

A gift can cause the righteous to set aside the right thing.

PRAYER BREAK

5. No idols 16:21-22

21 “You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the LORD your God. ²² You shall not set up a sacred pillar, which the LORD your God hates.

Trees & pillars were common pagan implements of religious devotion.

Moses tells them not to copy the traditions of the people whose corruption has called down the judgment of God.

[Elaborate – 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸ “I will

be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

In Rev. 18:4 we read about God telling the people of the last days –

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.]

PRAYER BREAK
