

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .

And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

Let’s Worship God

18th-23rd November 2013
Deuteronomy



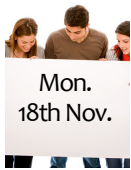
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Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 25:4-10 - Inheritance

notes We come now to the matter of levirate marriage. According to scholars, this practice was of ancient origin and not peculiar to Israel. It seems to have been rooted in the deep desire to secure a continued personal existence through one's descendants. God appears to have taken a common custom and regularised it for His people. How often God accommodates Himself to our weaknesses and frailties!

The compulsory character of the custom was taken away by the further provision mentioned in 7ff, and it is this that is underlined in the story of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:7,8). Boaz was not Ruth's brother-in-law, but a near kinsman. The point about the 'shoe' (cf also Ps 60:8) is that when any one took possession of landed property, he did so by treading upon the soil, and asserting his right of possession by standing upon it in his shoes. In this way the taking off of the shoe and handing it to another became a symbol of the renunciation of a man's position and property. We should note also, however, the prohibition of this kind of association, made in Lev. 18:16 and 20:21 while the brother was still alive; and the Sadducees' question to Jesus in Matt 22:23-33, Mark 12:18-27, in which they sought to prove the absurdity of belief in the resurrection.

Thus we see that the covenant servant is an immortal being with a stake, even beyond death and the grave, in that future blessedness of God's kingdom which was promised in the Covenant of Redemption to believers and their seed after them. Witness was to be borne to the dignity of the immortal servant-son of God by the perpetuation of his name in a covenant seed dwelling in his inheritance.

questions
1. How do these laws relate to Boaz and Ruth?
2. Where is the Christian's inheritance?

praise pray
Ps. 102A:19-25
1. Give thanks for our heavenly inheritance.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 28:1-19 - Blessings and Cursings

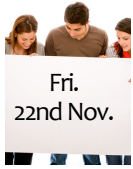
notes In verse 2, it is said that these blessings will 'overtake' God's people. Happiness is not to be found by seeking it; it 'comes' to those whose minds and hearts have been gripped by something bigger than personal happiness, and steals on them unawares - 'overtakes' them - when something greater than themselves has commanded their souls. So it is here: the blessing of God 'overtakes' those whose hearts are gripped by a passion for God and His voice.

Furthermore, in such circumstances, the divine blessing comes to them not casually or fortuitously, but by divine command (8). And when it does, it opens to us all the treasures of His grace (1,2) - it is a rich and wealthy experience. And - best of all - it makes His people 'more than conquerors' - this is the only phrase adequate to describe what is said in 13 - 'thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath'. In the enjoyment of this blessing of God, we shall never be 'under the circumstances' but always above them!

The ceremony of covenant renewal here also reminds us that worship, not warfare, was and remains the first priority in the lives of God's people. Before they can set forth for conquest, the covenant needs to be renewed. Also, according to Joshua 8, in this act of covenant renewal, Joshua was planting the law of the Lord in the land of Canaan. The Canaanites had passed the point of no return in evil and depravity, and God was about to destroy them because of their sin. And now, in their place, here were His people, who were to live by His law.

questions
1. How do blessings overtake us?
2. How can we be more than conquerors?

praise pray
Ps. 103:13-18
1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 27:1-26 - The Law of God

notes This chapter and the next are largely occupied with the ritual of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, with their curses and blessings, and both should be read throughout together, so as to get their full flavour.

Upon entrance into the Promised Land, Israel was to write the laws of God upon stones; this was to be to them a permanent inscription and constant reminder of God's will for them. Thus the writing of the law and the study of it was important.

But there was more. The people were called before the witness of the two mountains. And in the presence of the servants of God, they were to verbally acknowledge and submit obedience to the substance of God's holy laws. Verse 26 makes clear that it was to all of God's ordinances; any addition to or subtraction from that law was sufficient to bring down the curse.

As Christians, we ought to make the reading and meditation of God's work our delight by day and by night. If possible, we should often write it in the memory of minds and hearts. But there is more. The law of God is to be obeyed. And each Lord's Day, as His Word is faithfully proclaimed, we are given the opportunity to verbalise our acknowledgement of and obedience to it.

questions

1. What were the Israelites to write upon stones?
2. How should we view the law of God?

praise pray Ps. 103:7-12

1. Give thanks for God's Word.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 25:11-12 - Covenant Signs

notes We have seen in the previous verses the Bible's emphasis on the dignity of humankind. This is now further extended with the accent on an individual's dignity as God's covenant servant who in his circumcision bears in his body the sign of the covenant.

We see here also God's hatred of the sins of immodesty and disrespect for the privacy of others. God Himself and His law is set to uphold the essential dignity of the individual human person. None of us may improperly encroach upon the private life of another, whatever that encroachment may be. This only is the ground of true bonds between persons - fundamental respect. Even the most despicable type of person may change under an approach of persistent respect. And the danger that respect may evoke presumption in the other party is insufficient to excuse us from this duty.

But this is more than indecency. The reference to the reproductive organ seems to indicate the immediate conjunction of this prohibition with the law of levirate marriage. The forbidden act is therefore a contempt for the covenant sign. Thus the punishment involves a mutilation of the body. As Christians, we need to respect the signs of the covenant that Jesus Christ has given to His Church, whether they be the Lord's Day, the sacraments of baptism and Lord's Supper, or the means of grace in the public divine worship of His house. It is dangerous to despise these gifts or treat them with contempt.

questions

1. What are the signs of the covenant that we have been given?
2. How can we treat them with respect?

praise pray Ps. 102B:1-6

1. Give thanks for the sacraments, Word, and prayer.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
20th Nov.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in
possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 25:13-19 - Justice

notes The detailed instructions here are given to reinforce to Israel the importance of fairness and justice in the eyes of God. Weighing and measuring tools were to be used properly and innocently; all deception and fraud was an abomination before the Lord.

Strict honesty in business was to be a hallmark of all within the covenant (cf Prov 11:1-6), and dishonesty here was regarded as not only as a sin against one's fellows, but also an offense against God. The way in which the prohibition is expressed in verse 15 makes it plain that this is one of the 'commandments with promise' (cf Eph 6:2), and length of days is promised to those who honour it (the negative implication of this promise should not be forgotten).

The reference in 17-19 to Amalek comes very suddenly, with little connection to what has gone before. Delitzsch says: 'Whilst the Israelites were to make love the guiding principle in their dealings with a neighbour, and even with strangers and foes, this love was not to degenerate into weakness or indifference towards open ungodliness. To impress this upon the people, Moses concludes the discourse on the law by reminding them of the crafty enmity manifested towards them by Amalek on their march out of Egypt, and with the command to root out the Amalekites (cf Ex. 17:9-16).'

Taken together, the laws of love and hate amount to the single requirement to love God and, expressive of this love of God, to love whom He loves and hate whom He hates.

questions

1. What do these laws teach us about God?
2. How should we view sin?

praise pray Ps. 102B:7-10

1. Pray that you would hate the sin in your life.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



Thur.
21st Nov.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
And you shall put them in
possession of it.
Deuteronomy 31:7c

reading Deuteronomy 26:1-19 - Thankfulness

notes When Israel has entered the Promised Land, she was to remember God's goodness to her. The firstfruits of harvest were to be consecrated to God with a confession of Israel's unworthiness, her bondage, the Lord's rescue, and His gift of the good things in the new land. All this was to be in the context of worship.

The goodness of God was also to be shared with His servants, the orphans, widows and refugees. These firstfruits were to be holy and therefore unblemished. With the offerings, there was prayer for God's continued blessing upon His people and their land.

According to verse 16-19, the keeping of this day and the offering of the firstfruits was a commandment of God. In it the worshipper acknowledges God to be his King and vows to walk before Him in obedience. The Lord for His part renews His covenant promise to make and keep them a peculiar people and to exalt them for the glory of His Name.

Thus, it is good to give thanks at the end of each year and the beginning of every new one. Harvest Thanksgiving services can be useful too. Every promotion at work ought to be cause of praise and thanksgiving. And at every communion, we dedicate ourselves to God and He renews His promises to us. But note that the consecration ought to be without blemish. The Lord's Table is for sinners; but it is for penitent sinners.

Notice also that 'tithing' is not a legalistic bondage that is anachronistic with the spirit of the New Testament era. Tithing flows from a thankful heart. What was holy unto the Lord was regarded as a debt, and this refers to the payment or settlement of a debt. This is a good way of looking at our givings: when we do not give as we ought, we are really robbing God of what is rightfully His.

questions

1. What were the people to do with the firstfruits of their harvest?
2. What kind of things should we remember when we tithe to God?

praise pray Ps. 103:1-6

1. Give thanks for all that God has given to you.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.