

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

7th-12th October 2013
Deuteronomy



Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
For this commandment
that I command you today
is not too hard for you,
neither is it far off.
Deuteronomy 30:11

reading Deuteronomy 13:1-18 - False Teachers

notes In these verses, we see the evil of false teachers and erroneous teaching. Israel was not to compromise, for false teaching is the violation of God's purposes. All false teachers were to be put out of the church, and no false teaching was to be tolerated in any part of the church. So total and complete was to be this removal so that "there shall cleave nothing of the cursed thing to thine hand" (verse 17). The purpose of this law was to ensure that the Lord "may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show thee mercy . And multiply thee" (verse 17).

Church discipline is God-ordained. Its purpose is to save the false teacher from the error of his or her ways, and to protect the saints within the Church. It is a measure of the seriousness with which such a deception was regarded that the death penalty was imposed for it, as also for the other cases (9, 15). The very life and well-being of the people of God in the land were at stake. And when this was so, not even wives, children or brothers, or the inhabitants of a whole city could be spared. Thus drastically was evil to be driven out of Israel.

In the contemporary Church, as Christians we have a duty to try the spirits and see whether they are of God.

questions

1. What was to happen to false teachers?
2. Why was there such a severe penalty?

praise pray

Ps. 89:31-36

1. Pray for wisdom for our church leaders.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



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reading Deuteronomy 15:19-23 - Our Best for God

notes The law concerning the sacrifice of firstlings to the Lord is stated in Exodus 13:2. Saved from the angel of death on the night of the Passover by blood, they were given over and set apart for the Lord - and therefore withdrawn from all economic use (this is the force of the reference in 19, but, significantly, what was forbidden for economic use could be enjoyed in fellowship with the Lord - verse 20).

A distinction is made between animals without blemish and those that were not perfect. Blemished animals were not acceptable for sacrifice. As the Tyndale commentary observes, 'It was both an economic trick and an insult to God to offer them (cf Mal 1:7 ff)'.

Surely the spiritual application is clear: we must only offer our best to God, not our left overs. Any old, castoff remnant that we have no longer any use for, will not do, nor the small-change that we have left over from our major financial transactions in life. David perceived this spirit of giving correctly when, at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite he said, 'Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing.'

questions

1. What happened to the firstborn of the animals?
2. Were damaged animals offered as a sacrifice?

praise pray

Ps. 90B:6-9

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.



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reading Deuteronomy 15:1-18 - Compassion

notes Here the children of Israel are taught to show mercy to each other. The poor are to be helped and all debts are to be cancelled in the seventh year. This is called "the Lord's release". The promise is that obedience will bring the blessing of the Lord.

While the act of lending to the poor is important, the motive is just as significant. Lenders should not abuse or exploit their borrowers. Israel was not only to cause those who had no possessions to refresh themselves with the produce of their inheritance, but they were not to force or oppress the poor. Debtors especially were not to be deprived of the blessings of the sabbatical year, just as the land itself was to be released from toil.

The word 'release' of debt can be interpreted in two ways. It could refer to cancellation of the debt altogether. Or it could refer simply to the refusal to press for payment during the seventh year. Either way, the message is plain: mercy and compassion towards their fellows less fortunate than themselves are enjoined upon them.

Love to the poor must make provision for their continued prosperity. The inspiration of this was to be the remembrance of their own bondage in Egypt (15). Repeatedly in the Bible, it is the fact of our having been delivered from bondage that is the basis of the divine claim upon us to live true, generous, compassionate lives, and the remembrance of this fact becomes the inspiration of such behaviour.

questions

1. What happened in the seventh year?
2. Why were they to show mercy and compassion to each other?

praise pray

Ps. 90B:1-5

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



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reading Deuteronomy 14:1-2 - Mourning Death

notes These verses deal with mourning rites to be observed in Israel. The ground for the prohibition of pagan mourning practices was that the Israelites are children of the Lord, and they were therefore not to adopt or practise things that were inconsistent with or unworthy of that relationship. Thus the cutting of the body and the shaving of the head, often accompanied by passionate outbursts of mourning, were not to be the way for Israel.

Wailing and passionate sorrow is common in non-Christian religions. They have, of course, no hope of reunion. But such mourning also tends to cut off the mourners from the dead, and it is quite possible that this was its very purpose. Primitive minds were anxious to keep the dead away from the living. Uncontrolled outbursts may reveal a fear and dread of death and of departed spirits.

But the call of the Christian is different. According to 1 Thess 4:14, '...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope'. We who are in Christ, and who lose loved ones in Christ, cannot have that fear and passionate outburst through dread of departed spirits, for we have the hope! This is why a Christian funeral can be a triumphant testimony, full of hope and sweetness, even in the pain and anguish of parting with a loved one.

questions

1. What were the Israelites not to do when mourning?
2. What hope do we have in the death of fellow believers?

praise pray

Ps. 89:37-41

1. Pray for those who are mourning the death of a loved one.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



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reading Deuteronomy 14:3-21 - Unclean Food

notes Here we are dealing with the matter of clean and unclean foods. We notice that some food was simply unfit for human consumption. Other animals (e.g. swine) were unsafe to eat in a warm climate. Still others were too closely associated with surrounding idolatry.

According to one commentator: "It was evidence of obedience in God's people that they made a distinction between clean and unclean food....It was not the observance of food laws that distinguished Israel as holy, but a total attitude of willing allegiance to Jehovah in love and obedience."

When verse 21b speaks about 'seething a kid in its mother's milk', the point here is that it is the inhumanity and unnaturalness of doing this that is so forbidden.

Commenting on these same issues in Leviticus 11, Andrew Bonar observes: "The Lord wishes to make the sinner flee to the Atonement, by creating in his mind a loathing of sin, that so pollutes and defiles. Though there was nothing morally different between one beast and another, yet, if God put his difference between them, they must so regard them; and it was thus that every beast became to them a remembrance of the law, calling upon them to distinguish between what was right and what was wrong - what was permitted and what was forbidden. The Lord set up so many finger-posts which pointed Israel to the Fall, and reminded them that they were in a fallen world.... To imbue the mind of Israel with moral distinctions was the grand and primary use of this arrangement. "

questions

1. What would keeping away from unclean animals remind Israel of?
2. How does God view sin?

praise pray Ps. 90A:1-4

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



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reading Deuteronomy 14:22-29 - The Tithe

notes The law of the tithe expressed in these verses echoes teaching given elsewhere in the Pentateuch, e.g. Numb 18:21-32. The force and significance of the giving of a tithe to the Lord was similar to the institution of the Sabbath day of rest - a symbol and acknowledgment that all days belonged to God. In the same way, the tithe given to the Lord was the symbol and acknowledgment that all that we have is and from the Lord. The tithe then is a standing witness that we recognise this to be so in our lives.

Some have argued that the tithe is not applicable to Christians since it is not expressly taught in the New Testament. But this is unconvincing. Surely the spirit underlying the giving of tithes in the Old Testament not only continues into the thought of the New Testament, but is strongly reinforced by it. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount made the demands of the law more radical and inexorable for the Christian. Also, how can we who have seen the cross of Jesus Christ give less than the Old Testament saints did? In 2 Cor 8:1 ff, we see the spirit in which the early Christians gave to the Lord. This is the real heart of tithing.

questions

1. What did the tithe symbolise?
2. How should we give our tithes?

praise pray Ps. 90A:6-8

1. Pray that you would give your tithe cheerfully.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.