

APRIL 3

Deuteronomy 23-25

Deuteronomy 23

V. 1 Somehow this just seems like a discouraging way to begin today's reading. ☺ Just to put this into perspective, it could very well have been that both Daniel and Nehemiah were eunuchs. I know. I hate that thought too. These were two men who are heroes in God's eyes; and Daniel, if you look at what God says about him, is in God's list of top men of all time.

Vs. 2-6 This is a hard command to understand, but linked to v. 3 it makes sense. *A forbidden union* was something abhorrent, like incest. These people could live in Israel, but were not welcome in the courts of the tabernacle or temple until the 10th generation of living in Israel, following Yahweh. In v. 3 you have two children and peoples conceived out of incest, Ammon and Moab, the sons of Lot and his daughters. For these two people, notice, even *to the 10th generation* they can't enter the assembly of the Lord. Now, this would assume that someone from these peoples wanted to give up their gods, join themselves to Israel and worship the only God, Yahweh. I don't know how often that happened. Usually, Israel was the one defecting.

To balance this out, Rahab and Ruth are both examples that God showed mercy and grace to any individuals who came to Him. Rahab was from Canaan and Ruth was from Moab, and both became part of the community of faith. Both are related to Jesus.

Vs. 4-5 Notice the bad press that Balaam gets.

Vs. 7-8 The Edomites are from Esau, the brother of Jacob, son of Isaac and the grandson of Abe. The Edomites eventually became absorbed into Israel. The Egyptians have a special place and it is foretold that in the Millennial Kingdom, they will serve and worship Jesus (Isaiah 19:19-25).

Vs. 9-14 The camp was to remain couth during war because God was among them. Living in the presence of God was something they were to remember at all times.

Vs. 15-16 I take this to mean a slave escaped from another country. This happened to David in 1 Samuel 30:15 with an Egyptian slave they found. Israel was to be a safe haven.

Vs. 17-18 The ends do not justify the means. This covered every kind of prostitution, religious and non-religious. The word for a male prostitute (usually Baal worship) was "dog." Money earned from sinfulness was not to justify the existence of sin, even if the money was given to the tabernacle. I don't think casinos will fare well in the Millennium, even if people say they do bring in revenue.

Vs. 19-20 This may have had something to do with the poor, but it was a general rule also. They couldn't exact interest from their own people. In our movies the poor are always preyed upon by loan sharks. Not so in Israel.

Vs. 21-23 Notice that v. 21 is used by Jesus as He taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:33. It was not a sin not to make a vow. Jesus said not to do it.

Vs. 24-25 was a provision of mercy for the needy. These were crops that were planted in abundance and this provision was for those who needed daily bread. Just think, this is how the entire nation would have been during the Sabbatical year, that is, every seventh year. I'm sure if you were not destitute and had a morning ritual of going into your neighbor's yard and helping yourself to a handful of his raspberries, the city fathers would have had words with you.

Deuteronomy 24

Vs. 1-4 Divorce is also mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. Although this is where we get some teaching on divorce and remarriage in the Scriptures, the force of this is directed to prohibit

a man from remarrying a wife due to sexual defilement. This is a law of propriety and order, for the people of Israel. God was making the point that if a man divorced his wife, he defiled himself and her in the process. Today, it would be looked on as a good thing if a divorced couple, even after years and marriages between, came to Christ and were able to renew their vows in marriage.

V. 5 The marriage year is a great thing. Can you imagine this? The Lord gave Laura and me two of these.

From v. 6 to the end of this chapter, everything seems to fit together in terms of poorness and payments and pledges made for loans.

Vs. 6-7 You couldn't take a person's means of survival as collateral or payment for a loan. And you couldn't sell him to get what you wanted from him.

Vs. 8-9 It could have been that people thought of using leprous people to work or requiring some labor from them for mercy shown to them in providing food.

Vs. 10-13 You couldn't take a poor man's cloak to make sure he paid you back. The poor only had the clothes on their backs and they needed the cloak as a blanket at night. By the way, this helps define a poor person in the OT. You were not poor if you had more than one change of clothes.

Vs. 14-15 Another defining feature of the poor was that they had no money and no food, but for that day. So they needed to be paid that day.

V. 16 In this context this command could have something to do with the debt or crime of a young adult. You couldn't make the parents responsible for the crime.

Vs. 17-18 These verses restate what has been said in the context of poorness; and they state the underlying heart of mercy. The people were always to remember that they were slaves and were redeemed by the mercy of God.

Vs. 19-22 I wonder how often people in Israel actually did this. Notice that God's sovereignty also played a role in this. If they "forgot" a *sheaf* in the field they couldn't go back. Sometimes God makes you forget.

V. 22 is the key to them having a heart of mercy. If you think about it, this is also the reason we are to have a heart of mercy to reach out to the lost. We too were lost and without hope. By God's mercy we have received grace and forgiveness and life. Now, it is simply right that we share this with others who are lost. Ironically, the giving back we do is following our Lord into the harvest to bear fruit for the Father.

Deuteronomy 25

I think this entire chapter is held together by the same thoughts of mercy, justice, and compassion.

Vs. 1-3 Maybe the dispute had something to do with an issue of cheating a widow or the poor. The guilty person was to be punished, but with mercy, so as not to be *degraded* in the sight of others.

V. 4 Even a beast of burden was to be honored as it served. How much more so a man. This verse is applied to people in full-time ministry in the NT by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 and 1 Timothy 5. Paul says that the application was always for how one treated their servants.

Vs. 5-10 This too was an act of mercy. This figures into the story of Boaz and Ruth. For a modern-day version of this practice, check out the Hallmark film, "Loving Leah." It's Hallmark and it's a "chick flick," but it is very good.

Vs. 11-12 What I get from this is the same as in vs. 1-3. Even in defeating a person in a fight, you were to do it respectfully. This is the only time in the Bible a person was to be "maimed" for an action. If a woman needed to defend her man, she was to do it with a stick or a frying pan.

Vs. 13-16 Notice how this is linked to them staying in the land they were about to enter. God hates dishonesty, and dishonesty damages us and brings God's punishment upon us. This trick was also played on the poor. In a way, it was like making the poor pay more at convenience stores, because they didn't have the means or the money to get to a real store. Like loan sharking, it was another way to prey on the poor.

Vs. 17-19 I think the point here was that in this fight, Amalek played dirty by attacking the poor and the weak and the defenseless. God isn't into terrorism. Attacking someone who is defenseless shows a lack of fear of God. It took hundreds of years (700?) before this took place. And as suggested in the cases of Rahab and Ruth, if an individual Amalekite would have turned to Yahweh in faith, he or she would have been welcomed and saved.

Luke 10:13-37

It seems like a good place to mention that some of what Jesus said, He said on more than one occasion. Like any good traveling preacher, He used the same messages and illustrations and used them in different situations giving the message or application a slightly different twist from the last time He used it. In this case, if you do a search on *Chorazin*, you'll see Jesus pronouncing this punishment on two different occasions.

Vs. 13-16 These verses continue the "shaking the dust" discourse from yesterday. Jesus denounced these cities on a couple different occasions. Matthew 11:20 gives you the reason Jesus used these examples. Notice the warning and the truth of v. 16. That gives some perspective to our work in the harvest. Ultimately it is not our message or delivery that gets rejected. He speaks through us.

Vs. 17-24 When these guys returned they were very joyful and motivated.

V. 18 Satan hasn't gotten tossed out of heaven yet. That will come during the Tribulation. Satan's power was challenged and broken. The same must have taken place at the resurrection and coming of the Spirit to birth the church.

V. 19 The authority Jesus gave them was very verbal and literal. If you don't hear Him telling you that you have this power, don't test God by thinking you have it.

V. 20 This is our true source of joy in any and every situation in this life, on this earth, in this harvest.

Vs. 21-22 Notice Luke's mention of the Holy Spirit and joy. You can tell Luke was a missionary and rubbed shoulders with Paul. This also is an assurance we have, working in the harvest. Those who are open, hear. The Son reveals the Father, not us. I think it is amazing how God makes sure He can be found by a searching heart regardless of education, status or privilege. In fact, those *who think* they are wise and understanding can't find Him.

Vs. 23-24 This was said privately to the disciples, probably the Twelve. Jesus was repeating this to the Twelve, having said it to them before in Matthew 13:16 when He told them the reason for the parables.

Vs. 25-37 You know this story and it is only recorded in Luke.

Vs. 25-28 The entire context of the story is that this lawyer/scribe wanted to put Jesus on the spot. Jesus answered the question by asking the scribe a question. The very intelligent scribe was only too happy to show everyone how smart he was. It seems that when Jesus told him to go and do what he had just said, the scribe felt he needed to get Jesus to talk more to get Him to say

something wrong. He might have felt he needed to show the people that Jesus was a fraud and that he was smarter than Jesus. So far it hadn't worked well.

Vs. 29-37 Since we have read Leviticus and know what God has said about touching dead things, we can understand some of what is going on in this story. Just remember though, this guy was still alive, and if a priest or Levite became unclean, there were ways of being restored.

V. 31 I think it is funny that Jesus says, *Now by chance....*

Both the priest and the Levite failed to show compassion to their fellow Jew.

Vs. 33-34 Look at how Jesus described this lavish attention and compassion.

V. 35 A denarius was a day's pay at minimum wage. What if every state had a minimum wage of \$10.00 per hour? For an eight-hour day that would be \$80.00. This guy left twice that, so about \$160.00. Now that might not seem like much money in the West, but in some countries, \$160.00 will feed someone for months. The point is that this despised Samaritan was very generous.

Vs. 36-37 This story has a special meaning for us as disciples. We are left here to go back into the harvest and show compassion on those who are still lost as we once were. It is amazing to me that people who are saved can forget the mercy they were shown.

As disciples, we can't afford to ever forget the grace, by which we are saved. His love and grace is the only thing we need to be known by. His Word and our following in the harvest keep this fresh for us.

Psalm 75

V. 1 In keeping with the story of the Good Samaritan and our need to go back into the harvest and show the mercy shown to us, look at this verse. We are to recount the wonderful deeds of the Lord. And those deeds begin with the love and grace we were shown in Jesus. He died for us while we were still enemies.

Vs. 2-8 It is out of mercy and love that people need to be warned that judgment will come, but we have something to offer that allows people to escape that judgment.

Vs. 9-10 God's love and His Savior are hidden from the wise and understanding. The horns are a symbol for pride and power. And for the righteous, *Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.* (1 Cor. 1:31)

Proverbs 12:12-14

V. 12 Fruit comes from a heart set on God, looking to Him. The wicked emulate the wicked and covet.

V. 13 Living free of trouble comes from a heart secure in God. The wicked are enamored with their word skills.

V. 14 What we do returns to us, so we seek that which satisfies our Lord. You reap what you sow.