

Deuteronomy 10 - Thursday, July 28th, 2011

(1) "At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. (2) And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.'

- We begin with Moses, recounting how he carved two more tablets of stone like the first ones that he broke. This time he's to put them in the ark.
- Couple of thoughts here right at the start, the first of which is that this gives us a picture of God being merciful, as the God of new beginnings.
- Because of Who God is, and how God is, He desires repentance from His people, thus reconciliation with His people, and it's by way of the ark.

- The mercy seat covered the ark, with the commandments in the ark, so that God could meet with His people, and show mercy to His people.
- If I've learned anything in my relationship with the Lord over the years it's that He's a merciful God in that He doesn't pay us as our sins deserve.
- It's been said that when God sees us, "He sees not our sin; He sees only His Son," only because of His blood, that was "shed in our stead."

(3) "So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. (4) And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. (5) Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me."

- Woven into the fabric of these three verses is yet another beautiful portrait of the nature of God, and how merciful He is to us as His people.
- Notice that the second time Moses comes down from the mountain with the commandments of God, they're carried in the ark and not his hands.
- The first time, absent the ark, the commandments are broken, symbolically and literally, but the second time, present the ark, their kept intact.

- I believe that this is a picture of the first and second birth. We're all born, the first time, as sinners by virtue of our breaking of the law of God.
- This is why we must be "born again." In the second birth, the law is in the ark, covered by the mercy seat, and sprinkled with the Lambs blood.
- The second time the law is not broken because it's in the ark. So too is this true in the second birth, the law is fulfilled in the ark of our salvation.

(6) (Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. (7) From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. (8) At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. (9) Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

- Here, Moses is retelling the account in Exodus 32, when the Levites, of all the tribes, were the only ones willing to mete out the justice of God.
- Moses stands at the camp entrance and tells them that anyone who's on the Lord's side needs to gather themselves together with him.
- It's most interesting that it's the tribe of Levi who ends up siding with the Lord, and boldly taking a stand against their very own people.

- Actually, it was because of the Levites willingness to do this that they became the priestly tribe instead of the firstborn from each tribe.
- In other words, it was God's original intention to have the firstborn be the ones whom he would have serve as priests in the Tabernacle.
- This would seem to imply that this disqualified the firstborn from each of the twelve tribes and their descendants, from the priesthood.

Numbers 3:12 NKJV "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine,

- By the way, have you noticed a progression of sorts here-to-for in how they, like us, go from sin, to salvation, to sanctification, then to service.
- Pastor's would do well to take note of this sermon preached by Moses because of how it starts at the beginning, and leads to God's desired end.
- I think of the beloved Apostle Paul in our study through Romans on Sunday mornings. He goes from sin to salvation to sanctification to service.

(10) "As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you.

- This is now the fourth time that Moses brings up his fasting for forty days and forty nights in concert with the Lord choosing not to destroy them.
- The question is why does Moses keep repeating himself in this sermon? I suggest it's the attitude of Moses, and the gratitude of the Israelites.
- God said He would blot them out, and start new with Moses knowing how he'd respond. Now they need to respond with an attitude of gratitude.

- It is absolutely vital for us as believers to never get to that place in our Christian life where we begin to take the goodness of God for granted.
- If and when we do, it's usually due to our forgetting that instead of blotting us out, God, through Jesus Christ's shed blood blot's our sins out.
- Perhaps you've heard, even said; "but by the grace of God go I." I don't think this can ever be understated. It is all of grace, and grace alone.

(11) Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.' (12) "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, (13) and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

- This is one of the most important truths we could ever know in our walk with the Lord. The requirement of the Lord is our response to the Lord.
- Just as the Israelites were to arise and begin their journey in possessing the land, so too is this how we begin the journey in our walk with Christ.
- It comes vis-a-vis our response to the Lord, in that He only requires us to respond in the way that one who is forgiven of much would respond.

- I fear the Lord, walk in the ways of the Lord, have a love for the Lord, am in service to the Lord, knowing I could've been blotted out by the Lord.
- Here's how it works; forgiven of much will equal loves much, which will equal obeys much, and it will be done with all my heart and all my soul.
- Everything I do for the Lord, in my relationship with the Lord becomes a "get to," instead of a "got to." In response to what He's done, I'll want to.

- There's one more thing here before we move on to verse fourteen. Notice at the end of verse thirteen, the reason for this is it's for our own good.
- At first, this almost sounds like the scolding of a parent. However, if you really think about it, living our lives like this, is truly for our own good.
- Our lives will be good, proportionate to how good we live our lives. Conversely, a sinful life is a hard life, with the consequences of a sinful life.

Proverbs 11:31 NIV If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

Proverbs 13:15 KJV Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors *is* hard.

(14) Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. (15) The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day.

- This is sort of the "why" behind the "what," of the Israelites obedience to God. Perhaps better said; this is why it is that we should obey the Lord.
- The reason why is everything in heaven and earth belong to the Lord, yet, the Lord delighted in them in His love for them, and also chose them.
- Again, this fits with everything that Moses has been saying up to this point. He wants them to realize just how blessed they are, undeservedly.

Psalms 8:3-5 NKJV When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, (4) What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? (5) For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

(16) Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

- It's been said that the "therefore" is there for a reason, and this is most certainly true here. The reason is there for them to stop being stubborn.
- In light of all God has done for them, in spite of them, in showing unspeakable mercy towards them, there needs to be a purification within them.
- The circumcision of the heart was symbolic outwardly, of the cutting away of the flesh and carnality from the heart inwardly, from the inside out.

- When one has circumcised their heart, it becomes an outward sign of an inward reality, as the evidence externally of sanctification internally.
- Simply put, it's doing away with the flesh, without which we can never hope to experience a life of purification, consecration and sanctification.
- Like Moses to the Israelites here, so to was Paul to the Jews in Rome. Paul tells them a Jew is only Jew if he is one inwardly, in his heart.

Romans 2:29 NIV No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

Jeremiah 4:4 NIV Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done— burn with no one to quench it.

Jeremiah 9:26 NIV Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."

(17) For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. (18) He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. (19) Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is, it's the heart of God, as much as it should be the circumcised heart of man.
- Furthermore, it goes back to what we saw prior in how a grateful heart is an obedient heart, thus I'll have a heart, that is after the heart of God.
- We touch the heart of our heavenly Father when we love the fatherless, and the widow. This is what James called; "pure undefiled religion."

James 1:27 KJV Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

(20) You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. (21) He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. (22) Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

- Notice that fearing God serving God and keeping oaths in the name of God, is couched in terms of what God has already done for the Israelites.
- God has done for them these great and awesome things in so much that they went to Egypt a family of seventy, and came out a nation of many.
- In a way, this sums up everything we've seen in this chapter. My fear of God, and obedience to God, is birthed out of my gratitude for God.