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Man's Responsible Accountability To God
Deut. 27:1-26

A preacher had on his desk a special book labeled "Complaints of members against one another," When one of his people called to tell him the faults of another he would say, "Well, here's my complaint book. I'll write down what you say, and you can sign it. Then when I have to take up the matter officially I shall know what I may expect you to testify to." The sight of the open book and the ready pen had its effect. "Oh, no, I couldn't sign anything like that!" and no entry was made. The preacher said he kept the book for forty years, opened it probably a thousand times, and never wrote a line in it. # 950

There is something about writing something down and being accountable to what has been recorded.

Such is the case with the children of Israel as Moses commands them to write the law on large stones once they enter the land in order to be accountable for the law they had received and their obedience to it.

There are three movements in our text that unfolds this event.

- I. The leader Moses with the elders commanded the people to write the law on stones. vs. 1-8
 - II. The leader Moses and the priest spoke to the people to obey the commandments. vs. 9-13
 - III. The Levites pronounce the curses to the people. vs. 14-26
- I. **The leader Moses with the elders commanded the people to write the law on stones. vs. 1-8**

- A. The people were reminded that they were to keep all the commandments. vs. 1
 1. This is the only time in the book that the elders are associated with Moses in any instruction.
 2. The proclamation if for the entire law that had been given.
- B. The direct command is given. vs. 2-3
 1. The command was to be carried out at the time they crossed over Jordan and they took possession of the land given to them by God. vs. 2a-b
 2. They were to set up stones and whitewash them with lime. vs. 2c
 3. They were to write the law on the stones. vs. 3a
 4. The act itself would be an affirmation of God's faithfulness to His promise in giving them a land that flowed with milk and honey. vs. 3b-c
* The phrase is a euphemism for abundance and richness.
- C. The location was to be Mount Ebal. vs. 4
 1. The place of Mount Ebal was in the heart of the land near the city of Shechem.
 2. Mount Ebal stood next to Mount Gerizim with a beautiful valley between them of about 300 yards wide. vs. 12
 3. The height of Mount Ebal is about 1402 feet above the valley and 3,077 feet above sea level and Gerizim is 228 feet lower than Ebal.
 4. Both are composed of limestone rock and between them runs the main artery from east to west, the modern day city of Nablus lying on the throat of the valley to the west.
 5. The interesting thing is that Mount Ebal was for the cursings and the mount is barren to this day.

- D. The manner of worship was to be simple and complete. vs. 5-7
1. They were to build an altar of the most basic stones without some elaborate work of artistry, literally uncut stone. vs. 5-6a
 - a. God desires that people not be distracted from the worship of God by the fancy work of man.
 - b. God desires the people to have their full attention on Him and His word.
 - c. Tools would profane the altar. Ex. 20:25
 2. They were to offer burnt offerings on the altar. vs. 6b
 - a. Burnt offerings were symbolic of dedication and consecration to God being entirely consumed by fire. Lev. 1
 - b. The individual was giving himself to God wholeheartedly and unreservedly.
 3. They were to offer peace offerings on the altar. vs. 7
 - a. Peace offerings were symbolic of fellowship with God.
 - b. They would eat a portion of the offering with God entering into communion and oneness.
 - c. They were to rejoice before the Lord their God in and through the privilege.
- E. The words were to be written plainly on the stones. vs. 8
1. To be readable.
 2. To be understandable.
 3. To be accountable.
 4. To be responsible.
 5. To be inexcusable.

Illustration

Have you ever noticed how many men shirk the responsibility of marriage by stating that it is just a piece of paper and that it makes no difference, why? Because once they sign their name to that piece of paper, they are making themselves accountable and responsible to the woman and the legal system.

Application

1. We as Christians are commanded by Jesus to obey His word not by writing the law on tables of stone but He has written His word in our hearts. Heb. 8:10, 10:16
2. We are commanded to worship God in Spirit and in truth and not allow ritual and ceremony to deceive us and make us hypocrites. Jn. 4:24
3. We worship God in our study of His word in His church when the word is proclaimed distinctly and the sense is given so that the people can understand the reading. thereby able to say, Amen! 2Tim. 2:15
4. We should seek clear and simple understanding of the word and not fanciful, ingenious and clever interpretations that tickle our ears. 1Tim. 4:13

The leader Moses with the elders commanded the people to write the law on stones!

II. The leader Moses and the priest spoke to the people to obey the commandments. vs. 9-13

- A. They reminded the people of their relationship to God. vs. 9
 1. The people were to take heed and listen. vs. 9a-e
 - a. The word "take heed" speaks of warning with view of potential danger.
 - b. The word "listen" speaks of understanding with comprehension.

- c. They were addressed as "Israel" governed by God, they were to live up to their name.
 - 2. The reason being was due to their privilege, of having become the people of God. vs. 9f
- B.** They reminded the people of their obedience to the voice of God. vs. 10
- 1. The statement was a command not an option, "you shall obey".
 - 2. The person is God, "The Lord your God".
 - 3. The obedience and observance was of the entire law referred to by the words commandments and statutes.
- C.** They gave the order for the procedure. vs. 11-13
- 1. Moses commanded who the people were who would stand on Mount Gerizim. vs. 11-12
 - a. The people on Mount Gerizim were to stand and proclaim the blessing. vs. 12a
 - b. The individuals named are the son's of Jacob's two wives. vs. 12c-h
 - 1) Simon was the son of Leah, his name means "heard".
 - 2) Levi was the son of Leah, his name means "attached".
 - 3) Judah was the son of Leah, his name means "praise".
 - 4) Issachar was the son of Leah, his name means "hire".
 - 5) Joseph was the son of Rachel, his name means "he will add".
 - 6) Benjamin was the son of Rachel, his name means "son of my right hand".
 - 2. Moses commanded who the people were who would stand on Mount Ebal. vs. 13

- a. The people on Mount Ebal were to stand and proclaim the curses.
- b. The individuals named are the son's of the maids of Jacob's two wives, except for two.
 - 1) Reuben was the son of Leah and his name means "see a son".
 - * He forfeited his right of inheritance by going up to his father's bed and defiling it by having sexual intercourse with Bilhah. Gen. 35:22, 49:4
 - 2) Gad was the son of Leah's maid Zilpah, his name means "troop or fortune".
 - 3) Asher was the son of Leah's maid Zilpah, his name means "happy".
 - 4) Zebulun was the son of Leah, his name means "dwelling".
 - 5) Dan was the son of Rachel's maid Bilhah, his name means "judge".
 - 6) Naphtali was the son of Rachel's maid, Bilhah, his name means "my wrestling".

Illustration

Do you understand the significance of a witness, be it for a official document or a wedding? The notary is a witness to what is recorded in the document and the two witnesses at a wedding are to be the first to confront the bride or groom of their pledge to God and each other if they ever desire to renege their vows.

Application

- 1. Each of us needs to be reminded of our relationship to God.
 - a. To take heed to our selves.
 - b. To listen to His voice.
 - c. To obey the word.
 - d. To the fact that we are His people.

2. Each of us is reminded of our accountability to God through:
 - a. Teaching.
 - b. Preaching.
 - c. Reproof.
 - d. Rebuke.
 - e. Exhortation.

The leader Moses and the priest spoke to the people to obey the commandments!

III. The Levites pronounced the curses to the people. vs. 14-26

- A. The Levites were to speak with a loud voice the blessings and the cursings. vs. 14
 1. The proclamations were to all the men of Israel.
 2. The men were the heads of their homes and responsible for their homes.
 3. The distance was only 300 yards between the two mounts and the acoustics in the region are excellent.
 4. The Levites stood next to the ark before the priests and proclaimed the blessings and cursings from the middle of the valley, while half of Israel stood on each Mount. Josh. 8:33, 34
- B. The curses are twelve in number and are personal not national, they are given in the next chapter. vs. 15-26

* Why blessings are not mentioned along with the cursings is not known, thought certainly it is not difficult to figure out that man has to be constantly reminded more about what he should not do rather than what he can do!

1. Cursed be anyone who makes any carved or molded image. vs. 15
 - a. That would violate the first and second commandment. Ex. 20:3-4
 - b. The practice is said to be an abomination to the Lord, a detestable thing, due to being the work of man's hands to give some likeness to God, who is Spirit!
 - c. The intent is in secret which God see.
 - d. All the people were to answer, 'Amen!'
2. Cursed is the one who treats his father or mother with contempt. vs. 16
 - a. That would violate the fifth commandment. Ex. 20:12
 - b. The violation included speaking disrespectfully or striking them.
 - c. All the people were to say, Amen!
3. Cursed be the one who moves his neighbor's landmark. vs. 17
 - a. That would violate the tenth commandment, coveting someone's things. Ex. 20:17, Deut. 19:14
 - b. All the people say Amen!
4. Cursed be the one who makes the blind to wander off the road. vs. 18
 - a. That would violate compassion for the handicapped or disabled. Lev. 19:14
 - b. There being no fear of God.
 - c. All the people were to say Amen!
5. Cursed be the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, fatherless and widow. vs. 19
 - a. That would violate the ninth commandment, bearing false witness. Ex. 20:16, Ex. 22:21, Lev. 19:33, Deut. 10:18, 24:17
 - b. All the people said, Amen!

- 6, 8, 9.** Cursed be the one who lies with his father's wife, his sister or step-sister and mother-in-law for he would be uncovering his father's bed and commit incest. vs. 20, 22, 23
- a.** This would be a violation of the seventh commandment, adultery. Ex. 20:14, Lev. 18:8, 9, 17 20:11, 14, Deut. 22:30
 - b.** All the people were to say, Amen!
- 7.** Cursed be the one who lies with any kind of animal. vs. 21
- a.** This was the practice of the Canaanites, bestiality.
 - b.** This is an abomination to God. Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15, 16
 - c.** All the people were to say, Amen!
- 10.** Cursed be the one who attacks his neighbor secretly. vs. 24
- a.** That would violate the sixth commandment, you shall not murder. Ex. 20:13
 - b.** For man was made in the image of God. Gen. 9:6
 - c.** All the people were to say, Amen!
- 11.** Cursed be the one who takes a bribe to slay and innocent person. vs. 25
- a.** This again would violate the sixth commandment. Ex. 20:13, 23:7
 - b.** All the people were to say, Amen!
- 12.** Cursed be the one who does not confirm all the words of this law. vs. 26
- a.** This would violate the covenant with God.
 - b.** This would bring upon them the curses heard.
 - c.** All the people were to say, Amen!
* All of these negative curses if obeyed would bring about positive blessings on each individual as well as the nation!

Illustration

When a policeman arrests a person, they say, " You have the right to remain silent, you have the right to an attorney, if you don't have one, one will be appointed to you, etc" Why? So that the person understands the consequences of his or her choices!

Application

- 1.** The church needs men who will pronounce the word in it's full counsel with it's warnings and promises.
- 2.** The denunciation of sin is a very beneficial way by which a society expels sin and detours other to sin.
- 3.** The sins denounced are those against the most basic rights of every individual to insure a healthy and orderly homes and society.
- 4.** The ten commandments today are unconstitutional due to the fact that the students might read them and obey them.

The Levites pronounced the curses to the people!

Conclusion

Moses had commanded the people of Israel to write the law on large stones once they enter the land and after setting them on Mount Ebal they were to pronounced the cursing in order to be responsible and accountable to God for the law they had received and their obedience to it.

This was accomplished in three ways.

- I.** The leader Moses with the elders commanded the people to write the law on stones but Jesus has written them in our hearts.
- II.** The leader Moses and the priest spoke to the people to obey the commandments but the Holy Spirit speaks to us to obey.
- III.** The Levites pronounce the curses to the people but the Holy Spirit warns us and reproves us.