

Deuteronomy 13:6-18
You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II
February 28, 2021

⁶ “If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, ⁷ of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, ⁸ you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; ⁹ but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹¹ So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you. ¹² “If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, ¹³ ‘Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods”’—which you have not known—¹⁴ then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you, ¹⁵ you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. ¹⁶ And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. ¹⁷ So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, ¹⁸ because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

At Christmastime this past year, my friend Tina asked me to do a sermon on the question, “Why it takes so long to understand grace.” She even repeated the question, amending it as she wrote – “Why is it so hard to understand grace?” In asking twice, she was letting me know it was truly important to her.

I’m not sure an entire sermon is needed to answer that. And yet, at the same time, I’m not sure that a thousand sermons could answer it as well. The reason why is because every person ever born is an individual, and so every person is going to come to a different level of understanding concerning things like it. And, we cannot go further than what our limited, finite comprehension then allows.

The simple definition of grace is “Getting what you do not deserve.” The very fact that it is undeserved makes it beyond our ability to fully grasp. We may generally understand it, but we cannot fully apprehend the impetus behind the act.

The first question is, “Why does it take so long to understand grace?” Surely, she is referring to the grace of God. As this is so, it is because the grace of God is infinite. How can we ever explore an infinite? As long as the ages have been, and as long as they will continue to be, we cannot – nor will we ever be able to – fully peer into what is infinite. We can only see it from what we know, which is finite and limited.

The second question, though seemingly easier to answer, is actually more difficult, “Why is it so hard to understand grace.” Again, she is certainly referring to the grace of God. The answer to the first question is simply a punt. God is infinite, we are not, and so we cannot attain to what God has done.

But from our perspective, it seems the second question doesn't bear that limitation. We are finite and grace has been bestowed upon us. The Source of that may be infinite, but the results of it aren't. The act has happened and yet we find ourselves not understanding how it can be.

Text Verse: *“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.” Galatians 5:7-10*

The contents of the sermon today are more directed to mercy than to grace. In the context of the passage, God has already redeemed Israel. He has already given them the inheritance. It is the people who are faced with disobeying the word of the Lord who are addressed.

What they need is obedience to the word, and the Lord will have compassion on them for acting rightly. But this is the same as those who Paul is addressing in Galatians. They had received the grace of God. They had been saved and sealed. There is no question about that. And yet, they had trampled on that grace, returning to the law that Christ had already fulfilled for them.

In other words, they had failed to understand grace. Why? The answer is different for those in Rome, for those in Corinth, for those in Galatia, and so on. The Corinthians were given grace, and they had immediately turned it into an idol fest of division. They also had some who turned it into an excuse for license.

The Galatians had turned away from it and to an idol fest of “self.” Why can't we understand grace? It is because it is opposed to our very nature. We know how to be gracious, but it always stems back to something we can receive from it – even if it is to simply obtain a state of personal satisfaction. “That made me feel good.”

We turn from grace because we find it hard to accept that there are no strings attached, or that God has somehow failed to benefit from His bestowal of grace. That is completely contrary to why we are gracious.

And so, we think, if God isn't benefitting from this, then it can't be real. If it isn't real, then I need to do something to merit His favor. As a result of this thinking, what do we do? We go back to personal merit before the Lord, forgetting that personal merit is actually opposed to grace – which we suppose can't be grace because there was no benefit from the Giver of the grace.

Not understanding grace is a condition of placing our own finite, failing, and fallible limitations on God who is none of those things. That means that we need to have the mind of God. Not in the sense that we are God and have infinite knowledge, but that we accept that what God says is exactly what God means.

And the way that we do that is to read and accept His word, in context, and at face value. How can we understand grace? I would say that to do so, we must completely ignore our own self and what it means to be the person each of us is – one hundred percent. If we allow ourselves to be the judge of what God's grace means, we will never – never ever – understand what it means.

In setting aside the notions of self, we can then accept the gift of God. "He has done this, I accept it, and I will not attempt to think any further in relation to my own self in order to understand it."

If we can do that, then we will have all of eternity to no longer claim we understand God's grace, but to simply accept it and then go on in learning what it means, as He reveals it to us.

Tina, that's the best I can do. It is an answer that demands that we accept God's word, wholly and completely, as it is given to us. And I am certain that this is true because God's eternal, unchanging, and ageless word ends on exactly that note – "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen" Revelation 22:21.

If God wanted us to understand it from our limited perspective, He would not have ended His word with that. And if He expected us to understand it, He would not have promised us eternity to find out – in its fullness – what that ending sentence meant.

Grace is given, mercy is received, and the fulfillment of the law through Christ our Lord is how those things come to be. This is a truth that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Lord Above All Others (verses 6-11)

In the previous passage, Moses spoke of the prophet or dreamer of dreams leading the people away from the way in which the Lord God commanded. In such an instance, he said "that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death." In doing this, he said they would "put away the evil from your midst."

This is correct, but it is not the end of such an example, even by a longshot. That is a specific example of anyone in general. The world is full of heretics, and such heretics are to be eliminated. However, Moses now goes from the general to the personal...

⁶“If your brother,

The conjunction is a common one, *ki*. It is what opened the chapter in verse 1, and it will be used again to begin the next thought in verse 12. It is widely used and translated, but the word “if” – though not being incorrect – may not be the best way of stating the force of the intent.

One might say, “Though your brother.” In other words, it seems Moses is assuming the thing has occurred. In this, he will state the law for such an occurrence. He begins with the personal affiliation that is considered one of the closest in Scripture, that of the brother. To further define the closeness, he then adds in...

⁶(con’t) the son of your mother,

In the Bible, like in our own general speaking, the word “brother” can extend to someone who is actually not related at all. There is a closeness that we feel towards others that brings our affections and allegiances to that of a brother in almost all ways.

However, we also use the term “blood is thicker than water” to demonstrate that there are times when we will tolerate or forgive something from a blood brother that we would not accept in a friend, usually no matter how close of a friend he is. Hence, Moses further defines the relationship for this reason. From there...

⁶(con’t) your son or your daughter,

The NKJV leaves off a preposition. It says: *o binkha o bitekha* – “or your son or your daughter.” It is two different classes as Moses elevates the importance of the command. One might reject even his own brother, but would he reject his son? It must be so.

And, even more, his daughter is the weaker sex. The inclination would be to have mercy on her, or to say, “I am the parent, and I am the stronger. I can impose my will on this person to effect a proper change in her.” But Moses will show that such a thought is to be excluded. And from there, he elevates the matter higher...

⁶(con’t) the wife of your bosom,

o eshet kheqekha – “or wife of your bosom.” Moses could have just said, “or your wife.” If so, she may have been at the beginning of the list, not towards the end, because not all men love

their wives. But in adding the word *kheq*, or “bosom,” he is defining a relationship that is so intimate and loving that it is as if the wife is enclosed in the man. The implication of unfailing love is communicated with this thought. But even that is again elevated...

⁶ (con't) **or your friend who is as your own soul,**

The word “friend” is *rea*. It signifies “another.” It can be a brother, a friend, a companion, a lover, and so on. Such a person is defined by Moses as *asher kenaphshekha* – “which as your own soul.” This is the one referred to in the proverbs –

“A man who has friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18:24

It is the truly undying love for another without regard to physical intimacy or gender. Such a relationship as this transcends such things and is revealed in the strongest bond of all. It is how the relationship between David and Jonathan is described –

“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.”
1 Samuel 18:3

So great was David’s love, that when he was killed David said –

“I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women.” 2 Samuel 1:26

Moses, having brought in the closest of all human relationships, now says that even under such a relationship as that, if that person...

⁶ (con't) **secretly entices you,**

ba'sether – “in the secret.” It is a new word in Scripture, *sether*. It is a noun signifying a cover, literal or figurative. And it can be in a positive or negative sense. It comes from the verb *sathar* (to hide or conceal). In this act, any such person, no matter how close comes forward...

⁶ (con't) **saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’**

lemor nelekha w'naabdah Elohim akherim – “saying ‘Let us walk and serve gods other.’” In other words, any god, or any gods – other than Yehovah – that are brought forward for the purpose of worship. The words here follow in accord with the words of verse 2, “Let us go after other gods...and serve them.” Such gods are...

⁶ (con't) **which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,**

Again, the words are in accord with verse 2, “which you have not known.” The people are sitting before Moses, the representative of the law of the Lord. They have personally experienced the Lord, and they are being instructed in the law of the Lord.

Thus, the reference is from this point in their history, and it extends out from there for all time. Only Yehovah is known to them, and only Yehovah is to be known to them. Such a prohibition is to extend in all directions as well. As Moses says...

⁷ **of the gods of the people which *are* all around you, near to you or far off from you,**

Here, the words go from the singular to the plural for just one word, and then back to the singular – “from gods of the people which around you (all) near to you (singular) or the farthest from you (singular). Moses is ensuring that both the individuals and the collective nation pay heed to what is said.

Despite the plural being confirmed by the Greek translation of this passage, and in a marvelously stupid comment, Cambridge says that the words “ought to be deleted.” In this, they have elevated themselves to being the arbiters of God’s word, claiming that what is presented is subject to their own whims of grammar and of what is to be considered useful or unhelpful concerning instruction. They will be punished.

⁷ (con't) **from *one* end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth,**

miqtseh ha'arets v'ad qetseh ha'arets – “from end the earth and unto end the earth.” The meaning is obvious, and it is to be understood from both a geographical and a chronological sense. In no place, and at no time, shall this be tolerated. Rather...

⁸ **you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him;**

It is an emphatic and pregnant verse made up of five different clauses. And more, Moses uses several words that are rather rare. Hence, what he says is grave and striking – “No you shall consent to him; and no you shall listen to him; and no shall pity your eye him; and no you shall spare; and no you shall cover him over.”

And more, the first two clauses deal with the individual’s response *to* the offender – “You shall not consent, and you shall not listen to.” However, the final three clauses deal with the individual’s responsibility *toward* the offender – “Your eye shall not pity, nor shall you spare, and you shall not conceal.”

The offender is not to be heeded, and the offender is to be dealt with even as an enemy. As Moses next says...

⁹ but you shall surely kill him;

Moses places a stress upon the requirement: *ki harog tahargenu* – “For killing you shall kill him.” It is to be considered a judicial act because the offender has committed a capital offense.

But more, the person who was enticed is – by his actions – placing his allegiance to the Lord above his own human instincts, which would otherwise be to defend someone he loved so much. But Moses brings in an implied protection for such an action, saying...

^{9 (con't)} your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people.

If a person were to be enticed by another person, and he was to kill him right then and there, it could be argued that he had committed murder and that he had only claimed that he was so enticed in order to kill another person. This is why the law says –

“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ⁷The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.”

Deuteronomy 17:6, 7

In such a law, there is protection for the offender, and there is also protection for the one who took the Lord’s side in the matter. Otherwise, anyone could claim anything and get away with murder. Or the truly righteous man who took action into his own hands could be accused of murder.

This is substantiated by the fact that it notes that not only would the one who heard be required to kill the person, but then it says that “all the people” were to follow suit. The implication is that the matter was brought before the congregation.

However, once the matter was settled, the one who made the initial accusation would be required to back up his words with action. Thus, the punishment would be both a grave responsibility and an implied honor. Of this law, Charles Ellicott rightly states –

“The law may seem harsh, but its *principle* is reproduced in the Gospel: ... ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters,

yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26). It is impossible to deny or escape the identity of the Lord Jesus with the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He does not always put the execution of His judgments into human hands, but He is the same for ever.”
Charles Ellicott

¹⁰ And you shall stone him with stones until he dies,

Verse 5 said the prophet or dreamer of dreams who committed such an action was to be put to death. This verse now explains the means of execution: *u-seqalto ba'abanim va'met* – “And you shall stone him in the stones and he dies.”

This is the first of several explicit references to stoning a person in Deuteronomy, but it was already implied in verse 5. The land of Israel is the rockiest place one can imagine. There is hardly a spot that isn't fit to accomplish this, and it is a means of execution that everyone at hand could – and indeed was expected to – participate in. In this case, the stoning was mandated...

^{10 (con't)} because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Though they vary in several ways in both order and words used, what is said here bears great similarity to verse 5. The focus is on one's allegiance to Yehovah, and the explanation for that is – again – that it is He who brought Israel out of Egypt.

Again, and again, Moses returns to this same theme. As such, we need to remember the parallel. This is what Christ spiritually did for us. As always, Egypt pictures bondage to sin. Christ Jesus brought us out from that, having redeemed us from that house of bondage.

Despite the bloody history of the Roman Catholic Church, the church of the saints of Christ has no authority to execute the false prophets or those around us who attempt to draw us away from faith in Christ, but we have the same personal responsibility to love the Lord more than any other person.

He alone is to be our greatest desire of the heart and soul. That loving allegiance to Him is to be what will hopefully draw others into the same relationship. For Israel, however, execution of offenders was to be its own warning...

¹¹ So all Israel shall hear and fear,

The spelling of the word “fear” bears a strong emphasis: *v'kal Yisrael yishmeru v'yiratun* – “And all Israel shall hear, and shall (certainly) fear.” In other words, just as any society hears of

executions and realizes how serious certain matters are taken, so Israel would take it to heart and be absolutely certain to not do as that offender had done.

Such a punishment has a double impact. It removes the wicked from the land, and it causes the people to walk circumspectly. But even that leads to a third benefit. In walking properly, people will revere the Lord who set the standard in the first place. The problem for Israel is never with the law itself, but with the people's inability to uphold it. As long as the law is upheld others will see...

11 (con't) and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

v'lo yosiphu laasot kadavar ha'ra hazeh b'kirbekha – “and no shall add to do according to the thing the evil the this in your midst.” In other words, in executing the offender, it will end any other such attempts by those who are so easily led astray.

The precept is no different than countries that execute homosexuals. When that is the case, those who may think in that manner would never openly acknowledge it. The standard is set, the law is given, and those who fear the law will exercise restraint. And so, it is with any other activity – adultery, drugs, and so on. In executing offenders, the masses will cease the offenses.

*Blessed is the one who walks after the Lord his God
And happy is the man who shall see His face
It is on the straight path that he does trod
And it is he who finds the Lord's mercy and His grace*

*So is it for that man who walks after the Lord his God
And it shall be so, even when life appears dark and grim
His feet are faithful and with righteousness he is shod
He will see good days. Joy and blessing lie ahead for him*

*Do what is right and pleasing before the Lord
And He will honor you with life and length of days
Be carefully attentive to His sacred word
And live out your life to His honor and His praise*

*This is the path to follow for the discerning and the wise
He who understands is ever pleasing in the Lord's attentive eyes*

II. What is Right in the Eyes of the Lord (verses 12-18)

In verses 1-5 Moses dealt with apostasy in a general matter. In verses 6-11, he dealt with it in a personal matter. Now, in verses 12-18, he will refer to apostasy in an organized matter, saying...

¹² “If you hear someone in one of your cities,

Again, as in verse 1 and verse 6, the translation is probably more rightly, “Though you hear...” It is more assuredly assuming that the thing has occurred, and so action must be taken. In this case, it is an offense that has happened in a city.

Further, the word “someone” doesn’t belong here. It reads: *ki tishma b’akhat arekha* – “Though you hear in one of your cities.” The words are referring to Israel (the whole) hearing about something that has occurred in one of the cities. And to be more specific, Moses says...

^{12 (con’t)} which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying,

This is the same idea as saying, “the Lord who brought you out of Egypt.” In other words, the offense is aggravated by the notion that the city was provided by the Lord. He brought them in. He subdued the nations. He gave them cities. And yet, in one of those cities...

¹³ ‘Corrupt men have gone out from among you

The Hebrew is more expressive: *yaseu anashim bene beliyaal miqirbekha* – “Have gone out men, sons of worthlessness, from your midst.” The word *beliyaal* is introduced here. It comes from *beli* (failure) and *yaal* (profit). Thus, “no profit” or “worthless.”

Many scholars and translators render this as a proper name, Belial. And, indeed, that is how Paul renders it in 2 Corinthians when dealing with a similar matter –

‘Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’” 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

And yet, throughout the Bible, people describe an object by its predominant characteristic as a “son” of that quality. For example, the term “son of death” is used in this way at times, such as

when David said in 2 Samuel 12:5, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this is a son of death.”

The meaning is that the person deserved to die. Unfortunately for David, he didn’t realize that the person he was referring to was himself. For now, whether as a noun or a pronoun, the intent is ultimately the same.

In this verse in Deuteronomy, the worthless people are said by Moses to have gone out “from among you.” This doesn’t mean within the city, but from among Israel. In other words, the entire city is being contrasted to all the rest of Israel. This is evident from the next words...

13 (con’t) and enticed the inhabitants of their city,

va’yadikhu eth yosheve iram – “and impelled inhabitants their city.” This word, *nadakh*, or “impel,” has been used in all three instances of this chapter – the prophet of verses 1-5, the personal close one of verses 5-12, and now the worthless men of this section. One might think of beguiling or seducing, even through intimidation. And their words are...

13 (con’t) saying, “Let us go and serve other gods”

The words follow closely after both verse 2 and verse 6 – “Let us walk after and serve gods other which not you have known.” The offenders are worthless, and they are luring the people away to that which is worthless. This is because they are gods...

13 (con’t) —which you have not known—

It is the same expression said twice in this chapter already. There is the Lord, the God of Israel, and then, there are those gods which the people, or the person, have not known. The temptation is especially strong for those who may be going through a bad spell, who are struggling with the realities of life, and so on.

The thought may be, “The Lord is our God, and He isn’t taking proper care of us. But these guys are promising great things, contentment, abundance, wealth, and so on if we follow their gods. This is exactly what churches do all the time.

And so, we can see the progression of thought. The first is the false prophet or dreamer of dreams. Whether in Israel, or the guy on the street, he has something to offer other than the truth of God in Christ. And then there is the close relative or friend. They see your faith in Christ, and they – for whatever reason – want to misdirect you from it.

And then there is the city now being addressed. It would equate to an entire church that offers something tantalizing – be it wealth, prosperity, or contentment. Moses is warning the people in basic categories, and we need to be attentive in basically the same categories – from the general, to the personal, to the organized.

Israel knew the Lord, and yet they are being beguiled to walk after another they did not know. We know the Lord, and yet no sooner do we know Him, than we are tempted to walk after the Lord in a way we did not know, nor in a way that He has presented Himself.

For now, and concerning the city which has done what Moses warns against...

¹⁴ then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently.

Again, the Hebrew is very specific: *v'darashta v'khaqarta v'shaalta hetev* – “and you shall seek, and you shall search out, and you shall ask diligently. In this, a new word is introduced, *khaqar*. It signifies to penetrate, and thus to examine intimately.

The onus is on Israel to do their due diligence and to determine the truth of the matter. Nothing less would be acceptable...

¹⁴ (con't) And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you,

And again, the English fails to convey the force of Moses' words. It more rightly reads, “And behold! Truth! The thing is established! This abomination was committed in your midst!” His words are so poignant that what follows must absolutely come to pass...

¹⁵ you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword,

The Hebrew reads forcefully – “striking, you shall strike the inhabitants of that city with the mouth of the sword.” Here, as elsewhere, the sword is spoken of as a devouring instrument. The souls of the people are eaten away as the sword is wielded. The fate of the people who have acted in this way is death. But more...

¹⁵ (con't) utterly destroying it,

hakharem otah – “devoting it.” In other words, the city is to be placed under the ban. It is to be completely destroyed as an act of devotion to the Lord. Nothing living in it was to be taken out...

¹⁵ (con't) all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword.

Every living thing – man, woman, child, and livestock. Of this, Matthew Poole says –

“...to wit, all that are guilty, not the innocent part, such as disowned this apostacy, who doubtless by choice and interest, at least upon warning, would come out of so wicked and cursed a place.” Matthew Poole

This is incorrect. All were held guilty regardless of their innocence. Once the matter was discovered, it was all to be utterly destroyed with the mouth of the sword. The place was accursed, and so all that lived within it was under the ban. Further...

¹⁶ And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God.

The act of devotion to the Lord is to extend to everything within the city. It was to be taken to the *rekhov*, or broad open place such as a plaza. It was to then be piled up, and the entire city was to be burned. The word “completely” is *kalil*. It signifies “all” as in a holocaust, or whole burnt offering. Thus, the act of devotion to the Lord would be complete in its scope. But it was also to be forever in its duration...

¹⁶ (con’t) It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again.

Here, the word *tel*, or mound is introduced. It is a contraction of the word *talal* that is found in Ezekiel 17:22 where it speaks of a prominent mountain. Thus, this is a mound or heap. Today, many cities or sites are known by the word, such as Tel Aviv. It is a place where a mound exists upon which more has been built over the years.

In the case of such a city, however, it was not to be built upon. The mound itself was to be a testament to the apostacy of the city, and of the devotion of that city to the Lord by the people. The mound was to serve as its own witness for all time. And there is an important reason for this mandate, as Moses next relays...

¹⁷ So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand,

The word translated here as “remain,” signifies to cling to. The idea is that if any accursed thing were kept, it wouldn’t just be in the person’s hand, but it would cling to it. The stain of it could no more be taken away than could the shame of an adulterous woman. The Lord would see the thing and it would then withhold any favor from Him.

This will be seen in Joshua when Achan will take an accursed thing during the battle of Jericho. It clung to him, it found him out, and he and all he possessed – in turn – became subject to the ban. Thus, the people were to completely rid themselves of the banned city. This was so...

17 (con't) that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger

l'maan yashuv Yehovah mekharon apo – “To end purpose, will turn Yehovah from burning His nose.” The Lord is truly angry at the actions of such people. It is as if fire shoots from His nostrils as He fumes over their actions. And this isn't a state that may arise. It is the state that exists over their sins.

In destroying the city, devoting it to complete destruction, His anger over the infraction ends, symbolized by the thought of turning. Where there was confrontation and enmity, there is again peace and solicitude. This verse is exactly what we see in the account of Achan in Joshua –

“Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day.
So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger.” Joshua 7:26

Achan's grave of stones became its own tel. And in destroying him as was just and proper, the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger, exactly as this verse in Deuteronomy proclaims. Though the cause of the anger was different, the expected punishment – that of devotion to the Lord – was the same. When the devotion is made the enmity ceases. In this restored state the Lord will turn...

17 (con't) and show you mercy,

v'nathan lekha rakhamim – “and give you mercies.” The plural, mercies, is intended to show that upon those who are abundantly faithful, there will be a return of a multitude of mercies. The unceasing stream of the favor of the Lord is opened when faithfulness to Him is demonstrated. In this, He will...

17 (con't) have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers,

The idea is that in the destruction of an entire city, a number that could go into the high thousands, there will be a diminishing of the tribe and of the nation. And yet, because of the faithfulness of the people to the Lord, He will turn and bless them through multiplication so that there will be no gap in the tribe or the nation.

And the reason for this is because of the oath to the fathers. The Lord spoke, and He would carefully remember His promise when the people lived in obedience to His word. He would multiply their seed as a sign of His divine favor. Of this act of *kharem*, or devotion being restored to the people, John Lange states –

“Holiness, as it makes its demand through righteousness, must receive satisfaction, and therewith mercy can follow. The enlargement should counterbalance the loss occasioned by the punishment.”

With this happier tone restored to the nation through their faithful obedience, Moses affirms why restoration could be expected...

***18 (fin) because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is right* in the eyes of the LORD your God.**

Again, as has been seen throughout Deuteronomy, Moses states that what he commands equates to listening to the voice of the Lord. In other words, he is claiming, and the Bible is affirming, the doctrine of divine inspiration.

In obeying Moses, the people are listening to – meaning hearkening to – the voice of the Lord. What Moses says is right in His eyes. What this means is that everything he says is right. Obedience to the law is not deserving of a pat on the back for Israel over some issues, but then not something to worry about for others. It is a unified whole and it must be taken as such.

Apart from the matter of Achan in the book of Joshua, the closest Israel ever came to the matter described here is at the end of the book of Judges where a city of the tribe of Benjamin was found to be filled with sons of Belial, or sons of worthlessness.

In order to purge the evil from Israel, the entire nation came against them, but the tribe of Benjamin sided with their own people. Thus, the tribe of Benjamin was reduced to only six hundred men. However, they eventually regained their numbers, and noted biblical figures came from them including Saul, Israel’s first king, and the apostle Paul.

Throughout the Bible, there is seen grace and mercy mingled with judgment and punishment. But every infraction of the law demanded punishment before the mercy could be bestowed. This truth extends to all people. Judgment for sin against the holy God cannot be overlooked, but it can be meted out in a substitute.

Israel as a whole deserved judgment for the apostacy of one city, but the destruction of the city could appease the Lord. The sins of the people required judgment, but the penalty could be taken out on an innocent substitute – such as in the temple sacrifices, especially on the Day of Atonement.

And those things only look forward to the greater work of Christ, who is the fulfillment of those mere types and pictures. Each of us has a choice, and each of us must decide how we

will come before this holy God. Will we attempt to stand before Him on our own merits? The thought is impossible to even consider.

Let us act in prudence and let us choose the wise option. Let us come to God through Jesus. It is He who has already paid the penalty for the sins of the world. The full cup of God's wrath was brought to bear upon Him on the tree of Calvary. And, indeed, He bore it all. In this, God's wrath was satisfied. The payment was made, and peace is now offered through His deed.

Let us remember what Christ has done, let us receive it as our own, and let us stand before God forgiven and free of the sins we have committed in His presence. And let us thank God for Jesus Christ – now and forever. Let us hail our Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Closing Verse: *“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord,
Who walks in His ways.” Psalm 128:1*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 14:1, 2 *How do we become a part of this squad?...* (Sons of the Lord God) (44th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

You Shall Walk After the Lord Your God, Part II

“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son
or your daughter

The wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as
your own soul

Secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve
other gods’ Which you have not known, neither
you nor your fathers

-----such a person is out of control

Of the gods of the people which are all around you
Near to you or far off from you

From one end of the earth to the other end of the
earth

You shall not consent to him or listen to him; such
you shall not do

Nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him
-----or conceal him

But you shall surely kill him for trying to mislead
the sheeple

Your hand shall be first against him to put him to
death

And afterward the hand of all the people

And you shall stone him with stones until he dies
Because he sought to entice you away from the
LORD your God

Who brought you out of the land of Egypt
From the house of bondage where once you trod

So all Israel shall hear and fear, so they shall do
And not again do such wickedness as this among
you

“If you hear someone in one of your cities
Which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in,
saying

‘Corrupt men have gone out from among you
And enticed the inhabitants of their city, thus
relaying...

“Let us go and serve other gods”

Which you have not known
Then you shall inquire, search out, and ask
diligently
On such a deed light must be shone

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...

And if it is indeed true and certain
That such an abomination was committed among
you
You shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city
-----with the edge of the sword
Utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its
livestock—
-----with the edge of the sword; so you shall do

And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle
of the street
And completely burn with fire the city and all its
plunder
-----for the LORD your God
It shall be a heap forever
It shall not be built again, but it shall lay beneath
the sod

So none of the accursed things shall remain in your
hand
That the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His
anger
And show you mercy, have compassion on you and
multiply you
Just as He swore to your fathers, as a deep sweet
clangor

Because you have listened to the voice of the LORD
your God
To keep all His commandments which I command
you today
To do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your
God
To do according to all the words I say

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your
word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise