

10. God in every area of our life

January 13, 2011

It is easy to disengage what we do in our day-to-day-life from what we do at the church on Sunday morning. But the Lord expects us to live, breathe, and work in the mode of worshiping Him with our lives 24/7, not just one day of the week.

The two chapters we are going to study from the Book of Deuteronomy talk about the Jewish feasts that had impacted the ancient Jewish people every part of their lives as long as they obeyed Him as well as now. Additionally, the Lord spoke to them about the judicial systems and executive systems through His prophet Moses. I believe that there are a lot of lessons for us to learn from here.

A. PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Deuteronomy 16:1-4 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord chooses to put His name. 3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4 And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

At the first Passover in Egypt, God killed all the firstborn in the land, both humans and animals, except those Jews who were in their houses and protected by the lamb's blood on the doorposts.

Passover was "Independence Day" for the ancient nation of Israel, because on that night the Lord not only gave them freedom from slavery but also demonstrated His great power over the gods and armies of Egypt. Israel celebrated Passover a year later at Sinai; but after their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea, the nation didn't celebrate Passover again until the new generation had entered the Promised Land.

The New Testament interpretation and application of Passover identifies the lamb with Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who gave His life for the sins of the world. The blood shed by many lambs in Egypt delivered a nation on that first Passover night, but the blood of one Lamb, slain on the cross, will deliver from judgment any lost sinner who will trust Jesus Christ.

It was not the life of the lamb that saved Israel from bondage, rather the death of the lamb and the application of the blood by faith. Jesus Christ is our perfect Example in all things for us to follow, but trying to follow His example cannot save us, because the salvation is in the faith of His death and resurrection for our sins.

The Jewish civil year began with "Rosh Hashanah," the Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month (our September – October), but the religious calendar began with Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month which was also known as 'Abib' (our March – April). The week that followed was called "the Feast of Unleavened Bread."

The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed Passover and lasted for a week. During those days, no yeast was allowed in any Jewish home.

As many of you already know, in Scripture, yeast often symbolizes evil of one kind or another, because yeast is a substance that, though small and seemingly insignificant, yet rapidly grows and “infects” the whole lump of dough.

Yeast represents the sins that belong to the old life, malice, wickedness, hypocrisy, unbelief, compromise, and false doctrine.

The nation of Israel wasn’t rescued from Egypt by cleaning their houses and getting rid of yeast. They were delivered by the power of God because of the blood that had been sprinkled on the doorposts of their houses. Sinners aren’t redeemed by getting rid of their bad habits and “cleaning up” their lives, but by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for them on the cross.

However, one of the characteristics of a true child of God is a changed life.

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

B. PENTECOST / THE FEAST OF WEEKS

Deuteronomy 16:9-12 “You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain. 10 Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the Lord your God blesses you. 11 You shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. 12 And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

To some Christians, it is an odd thing to find the word Pentecost in the OT. It is not limited to the NT only.

The word “pentecost” means “fiftieth” and comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. This feast was celebrated fifty days after Firstfruits, which means that it also occurred from the fifteenth to twenty-first day of the seventh month (our September-October). Pentecost is also known as ‘the Feast of Weeks.’”

For the Jews, it was a joyful time of celebrating the wheat harvest, but for the Christian, it commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit and the “birthday of the church” in Acts 2. You talk about the joy of harvest, that day in Jerusalem, there were three thousand new believers of Jesus Christ.

C. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Deuteronomy 16:13-15 “You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your

daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. 15 Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

Like the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Tabernacles lasted seven days. It took place in the fall (our September-October) and was also called the Feast of Booths. During this feast, the Jewish people lived in booths made of tree branches, a reminder of the years their ancestors lived in temporary dwellings as they wandered in the wilderness. It was a week of joyful celebration that began with a holy convocation and closed with a solemn assembly.

Certainly God wants His people to be thankful and to rejoice at the good gifts He showers down upon us, but we cannot live in the past. The church must not forget the past and what the Lord has done for His people down through the ages. We're prone to take His blessings for granted and forget the faithfulness of the Lord.

D. NOT OUR SECOND BEST

Deuteronomy 17:1 "You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish or defect, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.

This not only applies to the ancient Jews, but also to many Christians today. Many believers have a tendency to always want to give God second best – if not third or fourth best, or should I say 'left over'. But God will not receive such a sacrifice.

Some might protest, "I don't do that." Then I have these questions to ask:

Does that person give their tithe and offerings regularly and joyfully?

Does that person serve the Lord and His church with all of his or her heart?

Does that person live the life that reflects Jesus with honor and glory?

I can go on. Like I said, many of Christians give their second and third best or even left over.

Malachi 1:8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the Lord of hosts.

That means that it is going to cost us something. That is why it is called 'sacrifice.'

2 Samuel 24:24 Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

E. WANT A KING LIKE OTHERS?

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 "When you come to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for him-

self. 18 *“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.*

The ancient Israel had three types of leadership: Prophets, Judges, and Kings. It started with prophets like Moses, Samuel, etc. But between these two, they had many Judges who led the nation, such as Deborah and Samson, etc. Just this prophecy declared the people of Israel wanted to have a king over them like other nations. Samuel finished the Prophet age as the leader of the nation before he turned it over to king Saul.

There were three things the king of Israel should not do and two things he should have done.

1) He should not do:

- *multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses*

The future kings should not put their trust in military power, rather depend on the Lord.

- *multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away*

The future kings should not put so much emphasis on physical indulgence.

- *multiply silver and gold for himself*

The future kings should not put so much emphasis on personal wealth.

Each issue was a matter of balance. Kings could have military power, wealth and one wife for each king. But none of the kings of Israel maintained the balance.

The worst offender was king Solomon. He had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and Solomon had horses imported from Egypt. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. He surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches.

What was he thinking when he was marrying 700 wives and 300 concubines who came with 1000 mothers-in-law? Total idiot.

Each of these three areas reflects the places where many modern Christian leaders fall: In regard to power, sex, or money. God’s commands for leaders have not changed; and all of us must be on guard against the self-deception in these things which felled Solomon.

2) He should do:

- *write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.*

By writing the law of God himself, it would be more dear to him.

- *shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes*

By meditating the Word of God and obeying it daily. It still applies to all of us.

Imitating the world instead of trusting the Lord has always been the great temptation of God's people and their churches, and each time they've succumbed, they've suffered due to their lack of trust in God. When church leaders adopt the methods and worldly marketing strategies, then the church has taken a giant step backward to be more like the world rather than Jesus Christ and is losing its divine distinctives.

Pastors' teachings can give in as well. Instead of trusting the Word of God and prayer and the Holy Spirit's guidance and anointing, when they start to depend on worldly knowledge in psychology and counseling methods, giving their congregation what they want to hear to keep them coming back instead of what they need to hear, it is the same thing as worshiping the idol – the idol of the world.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Sin does not require a whole lot of space in our heart – just a tiny portion. Before we know it, it will spread all over like yeast.
- 2) Whenever we take God's blessings and His faithfulness for granted, it is a sure way to become prideful.
- 3) God doesn't deserve our left over, but the very best.
- 4) When we are ignorant to the Word of God, we don't even notice that we are compromising into the world.