



Deuteronomy 14-16

Tape #7056
Deuteronomy 14-16
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn to Deuteronomy, chapter fourteen. The chapter begins with this statement.

You are the children of the Jehovah your God: because of this, you are to be different from other people [People look upon Christians, and expect from them different actions and reactions than what they expect from just anybody. Our actions and reactions should be different from other people, because of the fact that we are children of the Lord. My relationship with God should have an effect upon my relationship with everyone else, and everything else. So he starts out with this statement, “You are the children of Jehovah your God, therefore because of this,”] *you are not to cut yourself, or shave, or do abnormal things for the dead (14:1).*

Our reaction to death should be different than the Pagan’s reaction to death. Now, at this point, they did not have that much of an understanding of life after death. In the scriptures, up to this point, very little is said concerning resurrection. But God is teaching them, even at this point, that our reactions towards the dead should be different from that of a pagan. As the revelation of God progresses, as we come to a greater understanding of the plan of God and the way of God, and as we begin to understand the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, who is the first fruits of those who rise from the dead, all the more do we realize that our reactions towards death, should be different from those who know not, Jesus Christ. Paul said, “We sorrow, not as those who have no hope”.

Now the bible doesn’t teach us that we should have some kind of aesthetic attitude towards death, that we have no feelings towards it. We are human, we do have feelings. We do sorrow at death. That sorrow is natural, and there’s nothing wrong with it. There is grief at death, even for the child of God. The grief we feel at death, is usually selfish, because it is a grieving for our loss. If they were saved, if they knew the Lord, when you think of them, you can’t grieve. But it’s when we think of ourselves that we grieve.

My father and brother were killed in a plane crash. My brother had a private plane, and my dad and my brother were flying down from Victorville. They crashed and both of them were killed. My father had been retired. He was at that age that we figured, you know, his days are numbered, his days are limited. He’s getting up there in years, but my brother was young. Full of life, vitality. Just twenty four years old. Had several successful businesses going. Had the world on a string. Was really, had everything going for him.

It is interesting how people reacted towards their death. How that with him, my younger brother, they said, “Oh! What a shame! His whole life before him. Just on top of the world. What a shame”, as though he was missing out something in this world, by going to be with the Lord so soon. As though this world holds some glorious thing in front of him. What he really missed out on was a lot of misery, a lot of problems, a lot of woe.

It’s interesting the way we look at that. As a child of God, we sorrow yes, but we don’t sorrow as those that have no hope. Now God was beginning these lessons with them. “You are the children of Jehovah, you are not to act towards death as the pagans, who would cut themselves, and go into these wailings and so forth over the dead. You’re to react differently.” I think that one of the greatest Christian witnesses is often at funeral services. As people observe how we, as Christians, respond towards death.

I was able to preach the funeral service for my dad and brother. Able to talk about our love for them, about the family. As my mother was dying, what a supporter she was, she turned to me and says, “Honey, I’m going to be with the Lord pretty soon, and I want my favorite minister to have my funeral service”, and I said, “Well who’s your favorite minister mom?”, she said, “You son”. So I had my mother’s funeral service. I was able to stand up and bear witness to the virtuous woman. “Her children will rise up and call her blessed.” Now people sort of marveled at the fact that we were able to get up there and speak, at the death of my father and brother, and later on at my mother. But, that strength of the Lord, that attitude that we have.

There with the Lord! There with Him in His eternal glorious kingdom! That is our hope, that one day we also shall be with the Lord. So, we sorrow, we sorrow for ourselves, for our loss. But we rejoice for them, and thus our sorrow is not as those who have no hope. Children of God, we are to be different from the world.

For you are to be a holy people [God said] to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people to himself, a special treasure above all the peoples that are on the face of the earth (14:2).

This designation went to the nation of Israel. They were a special people above all the nations on the earth. God had chosen them, that through that nation, His Son should be brought into the world. Having fulfilled their purposes. Having been the national instrument to bring the Son of God into the world, this designation of a chosen people, a special treasure, now applies, not to the nation of Israel, but to all of those who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. So Peter takes this same statement, and applies it to the church. "And so you, Gentiles, Jews alike, who have come to know Jesus Christ, you're a chosen people. You're a special treasure unto God." That is something that always amazes me. Paul, in praying for the Ephesians, prays that they might know, he prays that they might know, what is the exceeding richness of His inheritance, in the saints. Basically that you might know, just how much God does treasure you.

Now people are always worried about a sense of self-worth and all of this kind of stuff, and maybe people do have problems with that. I don't know, I can accept that people could have problems there. It's hard to understand where another person is, if you haven't been in that position. You know, it, it, you need to walk in another man's shoes to understand his feelings. Ezekiel, the prophet, made a very interesting statement, that goes a long way in human relations, he said, "I sat where they sat". It really helps to understand another person, if you can sit where he is sitting. But, if you only knew how much God treasured you, God's special treasure. Remember Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven was like unto a man going through a field, and discovering a treasure. And for the joy thereof, went out and sold everything that he had, in order that he might buy the field, so he could obtain the treasure". As that parable unravels, you are the treasure, that He had such delight and joy in, that He bought the whole blooming earth, just to take you out of it! He redeemed the world in order that He might take you out of it, because of the value that He has in you. The treasure that you are to Him. That's Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, "Oh that you might know what a treasure you are to God! How much God treasures and values you!"

All you have to do is look at the cross, and you'll realize how much God did treasure you. The value that God places on you. So, you, the body of Christ, the church of Jesus Christ our Lord, you are a special people unto God. You're a special treasure. God values you so highly. Now, because of that, again there are certain things that are incumbent upon us.

When I read of some of the protocol, I'm glad that I wasn't born a prince in England, or any place else. They have this whole protocol, and you have to do things special ways, and you're always, you know if you do things the wrong way, then you're in trouble. I could have a horrible time with that, I'm glad that I can just be me, and be natural. I would hate to be bound by all that protocol. But because you're a child of the king, you know, or a child of the queen, and all, you've got to act a certain way, and people expect a certain amount of decorum out of you, and the whole ten yards, of getting into that proper etiquette, and protocol and all.

But as children of the heavenly King, you're not like the world. You're not to be like the world. You are to be special. And so, "You are the children of Jehovah your God, as such you're to have a different attitude towards death".

You have to have a special attitude towards diet. There are certain things that you can eat, there are certain things that you should not eat. Now as you go through the list here, some of these things that are prohibited, are things that I've never really had a taste for anyhow. I've never really wanted to eat a bat, or a buzzard. So, a, you know, pelican, or an ostrich, I mean they just never did seem appetizing to me, and the fact that they are prohibited, doesn't bother me at all. There are some things that I could eat, that I still don't really care to eat. But, he gives the rules for the diet. Now in reality many of these were health rules.

As we come into modern nutrition, we begin to understand a little bit about nutrition, we find that God is a nutritionist. The foods that He allowed them to eat, were foods that were good and healthy for them,

and the foods that He restricted, are foods that have a potential danger, if you do eat them. The eating of the shell fish, which was prohibited. We know that there are certain months in the year when these shell fish are extremely, well, they're deadly poisonous! So, rather than saying, you know, "You can eat them so...", He just prohibited the eating of shell fish. As we develop in science, and you know people begin to just learn, people who love clams and so forth, learn that there are just certain months that you don't dig clams. They learned it by the fact that a lot of their friends died.

The rabbit was prohibited. We know that rabbits are carriers of yellow fever, and special care has to be taken if you've handled wild rabbit. You've got to be extremely careful, wash yourself thoroughly and all. It's not as bad now as it used to be but, for a long time, a lot of people died as a result of eating rabbit. Not the rabbit itself, but the under yellow fever that they contracted through handling the rabbit.

The pig. We realize that the meat has to be cooked well, in order that you cook the worms till their dead, otherwise they can pass on into your system, and you can get trichinosis. So, God, rather than saying, "Cook the ham until it's thoroughly done, and the worms are all dead", He just says, "Don't eat the pig", you know. So he gives the list of the animals that could be clean, I mean, that were considered clean, edible, and those that they should not eat, and then birds which were edible, and birds which were not edible. Things that were in the water that were edible, and those that were not edible.

Then they were not to eat anything that died of itself. You found a dead cow, you weren't to eat it. Now, you could give it to a stranger to eat, that was in your gates. He's different! You are to be different from them. And you can feed it to the aliens but don't eat it yourself. Then again, the prohibition. The end of verse twenty one.

You shall not boil a young goat in it's mother's milk (14:21).

This of course, probably was just again the honoring of paternal kind of relationships, even among the animals. Now, the Jews have carried this particular prohibition quite far, to an extreme, I believe. As you see, they, "What does it mean boiling it in it's mother's milk?" So they developed the Mishna to explain what this meant, then they went on and developed the interpretation of the Mishna, to the point that now, it is not kosher to eat dairy products with meat products, at the same meal. If you would eat meat products with dairy products, they are highly incensed, and insulted!

A lot of times, people who go to Israel with us, at the evening meal, they'll come around and say, "What would you like to drink?", and they'll say, "Well I'd like a glass of milk", you know. Man! they turn all colors! You're not to have dairy products, because you see, you don't know if that milk that you're drinking came from the meat that you're eating. Though it may be turkey, still you know, you gotta... And the cheese may have come from milk from the goat of that shish kabob that you're eating, so you can't combine the meat with the cheese. You can't combine the dairy products with the meat products in your diet. And it all comes back to, "You're not to boil a little kid, in it's mother's milk". But they take that to quite an extreme, in order to not violate this particular law.

This is one of the issues where Jesus made reference that, "You strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel". If a Pharisee was jogging down the street, and as he's inhaling, would inhale a gnat, you would see him standing on the corner, putting his finger down his throat, seeking to gag and throw up, because you see, that gnat had not been bled. You're not to have any blood, you're not to eat blood. So, he would gag himself and just, you know, you'd see him, just trying to get that gnat out, straining at the gnat! Jesus said, "You strain at a gnat, and you swallow a camel". This is one of those things where there is that, you know, they carry it much further than what the law actually declared, as they have very strict rules against eating meat and dairy products at the same meal. Because you see, they're mixing in your stomach, and as your stomach is churning or boiling, and digesting the food that cheese is turned into the milk of the mother, and you know, you're seething the kid in it's mother's milk, and that can be bad. So, they, and really it's just talking about the preparation of it. When you're boiling the goat meat, the little kid meat, you're not to do it in it's mother's milk. You are to tithe. You are special people to God. You're diet is to be special, you're reaction to the dead is to be special, and...

You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year, by year. [Notice the tithe was to be on the increase, on the profit. Not on all of the grain, but just on the increase of the grain year,

by year.] *And you shall eat before the Lord your God in the place where he chooses (14:22-23).*

Now this to eat the meal of the peace offering, it wasn't to take, again literally. "You shall eat before the Lord your God in the place where He chooses", it's "Eating before the Lord your God", is the key here, and that is when you're eating the peace offering. Now the peace offering was the offering of communion and fellowship. Eating together signified a unity, a oneness to them, in a very real way. It was, it was very important to them, eating together.

It was, Jesus was always wanting to eat together with people, He was inviting His place, Himself to houses to eat. He said to Zacchaeus, "Come on down, I want to come over to your house and eat". He loved to eat with people. In fact, they found fault with Him, because He was always partying, always eating, and He was eating with sinners. But to them, that was really bad, because when you ate with a person, you became one with that person!

Eating together, you became one with the person you're eating, because, after all, we're becoming a part of each other because a part of that loaf of bread, is being assimilated, and becomes a part of my body, and a part of it is being assimilated by you, and thus we are becoming one, by our eating and our drinking together. So, that peace offering, is when you sit down to eat with God, and it's beautiful, when you consider, "Hey, I'm becoming one with God. I've given a part of the lamb, as an offering unto the Lord, and that part is His, but I sit down to eat the rest of that roasted lamb, or that uh, barbecued lamb, in order that I might eat with God, and become one with my God. Well, you're not to do that just at your house. You're not living up in the Galilee, you weren't to say, "Well, let's have a peace offering and eat together with God". There was only the one place you were to do that, and that was the place that God had signified.

Now, when they came into the land, it was first of all in Shiloh, and there is where they go to meet the Lord. Later it was moved to Gilgal. And of course, in the time of David, it was finally brought to Jerusalem, and that remained the place where they would go to offer their sacrifices and eat these feasts before the Lord. So, "You are to eat before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses". There you were to...

Bring the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, the firstlings of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to reverence the Lord your God always (14:23).

"You are God's special people. There are special rules that apply to you."

Now if the journey is too long for you, and you're not able to carry the tithes, [Say you lived up in the Galilee, and you want to have a, you know, you want to go to Jerusalem, cause you want to take your tithe to God, and say you've had five new sheep, and a couple of cattle first born, that you want to bring to the Lord for your tithes. Well, man that's a long way to bring them. Hard to carry them that far. So, what you do is sell them, and you bring the money on down, and when you get there, then you buy a lamb, or a goat, or whatever kind of meat that you want to eat. Whatever your heart's desire. You have your peace offering, you offer it as your peace offering, and you eat it there before the Lord. Here he says,] you shall spend your money [verse twenty six] for whatever your heart desires, for the oxen or sheep, or wine or similar drink, or [literally] strong drink, or whatever your heart desires. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you, and your household (14:24-26),

So here they are told that in this meal, in this peace offering, they could drink wine. Or they could buy the wine or strong drink. Now this is a difficult passage, admittedly. So we must compare scripture with scripture. In the book of Proverbs, there's an interesting scripture. It's about the twenty third chapter, verse, beginning with verse twenty nine. "Who has woe, who has sorrow, who has contentions, who has complaints, who has wounds without cause, who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine. Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly. At the last, it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. (Talking about of course, drunkenness, delirium.) Yes you'll be like those who lie down in the midst of the sea, (You know, you'll try and take a nap on the lake or something.) or like one who lies on the top of a mast saying, They have struck me, but I was not hurt. They have beaten me, but I did not feel it, and when shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?" And it speaks of the sad plight of a person who has become a wino or an alcoholic, the abuse that

they go through.

Now, it is practiced in many Christian services, the drinking of wine. There are many Christians that feel at liberty to do so, and to be frank, I cannot make a biblical case against it. I can make a biblical case against it for myself. Paul said, "For the elders of the church, they were not to be given to wine". As an overseer, an elder within the church, I'm not to drink wine. Paul, the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians said, "All things are lawful for me", but he declared, "I will not be brought under the power of any". I personally feel that it is unwise to take anything into your system that can bring you under it's power, or what is commonly termed, under the influence. And you understand that term. "He was drinking, or he was driving under the influence". That is, he didn't have his full senses. He didn't have his full capacities. He did not have his full reasoning processes. Why? Because he was under the power, or the influence of the beer, or the wine, or whatever. So the bible says that strong drink is raging. Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Whoever is deceived thereby, is not wise.

I cannot make an airtight scriptural case that you should not drink wine. However I can just declare to you that you'll be much better off if you don't. Your judgement, and all will be impaired when you ingest alcohol into your system, because it has an effect upon your brain cells. Actually destroys some of your brain cells. You cannot help that alcohol destroys some of your brain cells. Every time you drink, you're destroying some of your brain cells. Now, you may have enough cells that you're not worried about it, but you keep it up long enough, and man you become a dumb duck. Of course it also destroys your liver, you're liver just has to handle it, but your liver can only handle so much. Your liver does not replace itself. As you destroy your liver man, you're in trouble because, you just, you're inviting, you're just better off if you don't. "He that is wise, is not deceived thereby." It's really wisdom not to drink.

The chapter closes with the declaration that,

They are to take care of the priests, the Levites, who are within your gates; And at the end of every third year you're to bring the tithe of your produce: And the Levite, (because he has no portion nor inheritance with you,) the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, within your gates, may come, and eat and be satisfied; and the Lord [You are special people unto Jehovah. The Lord,] will bless you (14:27-29).

Chapter 15

Now in chapter fifteen,

At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts (15:1).

Now that does not mean that the debt is not forgiven, that means that you don't collect payments on the debt in the seven years, in the seventh year. Now every seventh year, they were to let the land rest. So if your land was resting, you weren't making any money in the seventh year, thus every seventh year, when you had a debt that you owed, you didn't have to make payments. You were to release that person from making payments on that debt, in the seventh year. But it does not necessarily indicate that the debt was forgiven, you know that it's wiped out in the seventh year, but just no payments demanded in the seventh year.

So this is the form of release: Every creditor that has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or brother; because it's called the Lord's release. Now of a foreigner you may require it: [He has to continue to make payments through the seventh year. Why? Because as a foreigner, he's not bound by that seventh year of rest, letting the ground rest, he's still making money, and so you can require that he makes the payments through the seventh year.] but your hand shall release what is owed by thy brother; Except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God has given to you to possess as an inheritance (15:2-4):

So God is promising them, "You're going into this land, you're going to be prosperous, you're gonna be blessed in this land".

But only [conditional "only"] if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care, all the commandments which I command you today (15:5).

So the prosperity goes along with the keeping of the law of the Lord. Now David, in Psalm one said, "Blessed is the man who meditates in the law of the Lord day and night. He will be like a tree planted by the

river of water, bringing forth fruit in it's season. His leaf also shall not wither, whatsoever he does shall prosper." God promises prosperity in the land, "If you will keep the law. If you will obey the voice to observe with care, the commandments".

For the Lord your God will bless you, just as he promised you: and you will lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you will reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you (15:6).

And this was true. As long as they served the Lord, God prospered them. I forget what king it was said of, but it declared, "And as long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper". I think it was king Asa, in II Corinthians, fifteen or so. As long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper. God will bless you if you seek the Lord, if you put the Lord first in your life, God will bless you! That's basically what God is saying. "Put me first. Obey my commandments, I'll bless you. I will be with you and I will bless you." Now they are to show generosity towards the poor.

It's interesting to me all the way through the bible, how God takes up the cause of the poor. God does not want the poor being oppressed, or taken advantage of. I think that one of the cruelest things in the world, are those who would take advantage of poor people. You know, there are those who actually prey upon the poor, and I think that, that's extremely sad. There are a lot of advertisements for going into your own business. All you have to do is invest so much money, you know they'll set you up in business. It's the poor people that are offered, the ones that are taken by these things. Because they can't get a job and so they'll borrow money and they'll buy these chinchillas or whatever you know, and no one's ever made any money on those things. But people will take advantage of them, and it's rather sad.

But God always upholds the cause of the poor. There's an interesting scripture that says, "He who lends to the poor, lends to the Lord". Now God's really never asked to borrow anything for Himself, but He says, "Hey if you lend to the poor, then you're lending to me". Now you can always be sure that God will pay His debts! You lend to the Lord, you can be sure that God's gonna repay you with interest, with healthy interest. So the giving to the poor is something that the scripture is always enforcing. The heart of God towards the poor. The interest of God in the poor. We, if we are children of God, will also have an interest in helping the poor.

If there is any poor among you poor men of your brethren within any of the gates of your land which the Lord has given you, you're not to harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother. But you should open your hand wide to him, and willingly lend him sufficient for his needs, whatever he needs. [If you have the capacity, if you have the ability, you are to lend to them.] Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, Ah the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become a sin among you (15:7-9).

In other words, you say, "Wow, next year's the seventh year and he won't be able to make any payments next year, and oh no", and you take that into, as a consideration in your giving towards him.

You should surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him: because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works, and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land (15:10-11):

Jesus said, "The poor you have with you always". There are always gonna be poor people. Why? Because they follow poor practices. I'm amazed at some of the poor practices of people. The poor judgement of people. The reason why a lot of people are poor, is they don't have any sense in managing their money. We have some friends who are poor, who buy the most extravagant things. Things I would never buy, I would never consider buying. I just figure them out of my range. Oh I could afford to, but I just think that, that's foolish, extravagant.