

Deuteronomy Chapter 27 Commentary

1 And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. 2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: 3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. 4 Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster.

God tells Israel; build a monument of stones and write all the commandments of God upon them. This is the first thing they are to do, when they enter the land of promise.

We can make an application of this to our own lives as we enter the church. The first thing we should do, as a Christian, is to learn all we can about God's commandments for his people. We do this by intensive and in-depth study of God's word, the bible. When a person joins the church, the church should immediately undertake to get them grounded, in the doctrinal principles taught by God's word.

You could start by going through the church's articles of faith, and then continue to broaden to other subjects. We remember God's command for the king, who ruled over Israel, seen in: **De 17: 18-20; 18** "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

It seems to me, that this building of the monument and inscribing all the commandments upon it, is the same principle applied to all Israel, not the king only. Since scripture teaches that we today, the born again children of God, are kings and priest, I see the commandment for the king has application to us today.

- **Re 1:3-6; 3** "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. 4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
- **Re 5:9-10; 9** "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

We understand that this was to be accomplished by the work of Israel. This is not concerning the finished, and accomplished, work of eternal redemption, which has already been done by Christ. The application to us is: we have been born again; thus, we enter into the land of promise, and now we must put forth the effort to come to a full understanding of God's word of truth. We notice that it was not for the king to just read the commandments of God and then forget them. He was to write them and keep them with him always, as long as he lived. Certainly God expects the same from us, to write the word of his law in our minds and hearts and keep it always with us, all of our lives.

Does this mean that we are to tote our bibles around with us? While that wouldn't hurt us, the application is as seen in: ***Heb 10:16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;"*** Through reading and studying God will write these truths in our minds, as well as instill them in our hearts, so that we take them wherever we go and they will be our ready sword of defense.

5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God: 7 And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

"***thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them.***" This is an altar, of sacrifice to God, and is not to be made of anything, that man has shaped or formed. Israel is to take whole stones and fit them together to make this altar. It reminds them that their total deliverance has been by the hand of God and not of themselves. If it was built with stones which man had shaped it would be tainted by works.

Application to us today: We should come before God in prayer, and thanksgiving, with only the things that God has shaped, not that which we shape ourselves. What do you mean? When you pray; do you come to God with your personal wish list, or do you come to God praying that which is in God's word and will? Why do you think Christ demonstrated for us, and his disciples, "***thy will be done***" in?

- ***Mt 26:42 "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."***
- ***Lu 11:2 "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."***

Jesus further demonstrates the use of the stones that were not shaped by human hands, in:

- ***Joh 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."***
- ***Joh 16:23 "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."***
- ***Joh 16:24 "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."***

You understand? Christ is the only stone not shaped by the hands of man, and the only one who exactly did his Father's will. Christ is our altar of sacrifice, and the name through which we ask of God the Father. He is the rock upon which the church of the Lord was built.

I don't think this is a hard concept to see and understand. We are to pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ. We are to pray to God asking for his will to be accomplished, not our own. We should pray for our needs, not wants, and ask for the things that God tells us in his word we need; asking especially for the anointing and guiding presence of the Holy Spirit, that all we do and say may bring glory and praise to God's holy name.

God requires that they use only God made stones to build an altar of sacrifice. Doesn't this tell us; God does not want our works as a sacrifice for salvation? Certainly, it tells us to depend completely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Even to join the church body; we are not to bring our "good works" before the church as a reason for them to receive us into the church body. What we should bring to the church, as a door of admittance opened to us, is that great need for Jesus Christ in our life, as well as confession it was his blood that purchased the redemption of our sins; confessing that Jesus has caused us to be indwelt with the Holy Spirit and to be born again, Glory to God; it is all the great work of salvation that he has accomplished on our behalf.

"and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God." God commanded to build an altar of sacrifice and commanded offer the offerings thereon. They were even commanded to eat at the altar of sacrifice. This gives us the prophetic picture; the altar of stones, not shaped by human hands, is representative of Jesus Christ, upon whom the church of Salvation by the Grace of God is established; in which we are enrolled as born again sinners. When we approach this altar of worship, we not only offer our prayers and thanks; we also eat of the bread of Life, which is Jesus, the Christ. We need to feed upon the word of truth, and to grow thereby in the knowledge of our God. Do you see why we should come to church rejoicing? Great and abundant are the mercies of our Lord and Saviour.

8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. 9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

Moses tells Israel, the day you enter into the land of promise; you will become the people of God. Now we understand; they were already God's chosen people, however, they were now God's chosen people in the place God chose to put his name and promised to give to Israel. Therefore, you, having received the fulfillment of the promise of God, are to obey all the commandments that God has set before you, while you were on your journey to the land of promise.

It is not hard to make application of this in our lives today. If we have God fearing parents, they have brought us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and instilled in us his word of truth. This is pictorial of the wilderness journey of Israel, and their receiving the commandments of God while upon that journey. Being born again and delivered out of the bondage of sin, we are to enter into our own land of promise, the church established by Jesus Christ, the church of Salvation by Grace. When we enter into the visible church, we are now recognized as God's people, and we are now to obey all the commandments of God, and Christ. It is a prophetic picture of a born again sinner joining the church.

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

My study bible gives reference to scriptures in Deuteronomy 11 and Joshua 8. You really need to read the whole chapters of these references to get the whole picture in your mind. I will here give a portion of each that may help us to see the basic meaning of what God is telling Israel to do here.

- *De 11:26-32; 26 "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. 29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. 30 Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? 31 For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. 32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day."*
- *Jos 8:30-35; 30 "Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, 31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. 33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."*

As we consider all these scriptures; I want to try and convey a picture to you. Did you notice that the altar with the writing of the laws of God was in the Promised Land? Do you understand; that in the Promised Land, there is no part of God's law hidden from the occupants thereof? Now, the question; do you see? When we are delivered from the darkness of death, by being born again by the Holy Spirit, the laws of God are plainly written for us to see, and understand what we are supposed to be doing? Being born again; we are given eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand the truths of our God.

Through obedience to God, Joshua and Israel were given a great deliverance by God's power and direction in their lives. This altar was built upon mount Ebal as an emblematic reminder to Israel. It was built, and written upon, and read to all Israel, that if they obeyed God; there was to be blessing in their

lives, such as they had just witnessed, in the deliverance of God to give them possession of these two mountains, and the valley that lay between.

If we go there; we can read, and understand better, the meaning of what is here touched upon. Basically, these two mountains were approximately the same size, and varied mainly in their fruitfulness. Gerizim was a very fruitful mountain, and the admonition is; be obedient to God and you will be as this mountain, very fruitful. Be disobedient to God and you will be as mount Ebal, very barren and unfruitful.

One thing I noticed was; the altar was built on mount Ebal, which is recognized as the less fruitful mountain. As I think about this fact, and the barrenness of the mount; I am reminded; God sometimes uses hardships in our lives, to remind us of the blessing we have, which come from Him, only. Think about this also; the law commandments being to the church in the Old Testament, which is less fruitful than the church of Salvation by Grace in the New Testament. How do we know this? Let's look at a couple of scriptures:

- **Isa 54:1-3; 1 "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. 2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; 3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."** Notice the phrase, "**thou that didst not travail with child:**" and see that the Christ was born under the law service of the ceremonial law. There are several occasions in scripture that point out that the ceremonial law service was to come before the grace church, such as; the wives of Abraham and Jacob.
- **Ga 4:27-31; 27 "For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travalest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."**

We understand that both of these scriptures are making a comparison of the Old Testament church and the New Testament church, with the New Testament church having the greater multitude of children, by the grafting in of the Gentiles. Thus, we see the prophetic picture of the two mountains and their fruitfulness.

Another thing I noticed is; Israel gathered around the Ark of the Covenant that was there present, seen in **Joshua 8:33**. The ark is representative of Jesus Christ. All of God's people are focused upon Christ. Those in the Old Testament looking for his coming, and us in the New Testament are looking for his 2nd coming, with our focus being; looking back upon the cross to realize the joy of our salvation. We are like the two groups of Israel standing on either side of the ark facing each other, with all looking to Christ.

May God grant us humble hearts, fervent in their desire to serve God, and to serve God, only. May God grant; the same blessing to our children and the generations following. Praise, and glorify, the name of the Lord, and the name of our wonderful Saviour, and Lord, Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

14 And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, 15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. 16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. 17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. 18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. 19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. 20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. 21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. 22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. 23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. 24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. 25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. 26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

We see 12 curses pronounced in these verses. The Levite priests were to pronounce each curse, and all of Israel was to respond by saying Amen. Amen means: *sure; faithfulness; truly: Amen, so be it, truth*, and the root word (*'aman*) means: *to build up or support; to foster as a parent or nurse; to render (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain; be faithful, steadfast, sure, trusty, verified, turn to the right*.

We see from the definitions; Israel was being taught the commandments of God, and basically, taking a vow, before God, to accept and uphold his commandments. They were acknowledging; they knew what God's commandments were, and were willing to accept them, and to abide by them. They were also acknowledging; if they trespassed these commandments; they understood they would suffer the judicial wrath of God for their disobedience, and none could say they didn't know.

This is the basic concept mentioned earlier. When you join the church you should immediately learn the truths, doctrines, and bylaws thereof. After all; God has blessed you with entrance into a land of promise, the church, and you need to know what God expects of you, as a draftee into the warfare against sin and satan. You need to know about all the pieces of armor, which God has provided you, for your own protection, and for his glory.

May God bless us to be faithful servants to him, even as his own Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, was a faithful, and obedient, servant to his Father.