



## MONDAY 14 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

### Read: Deuteronomy 14:1-21 & 1 Peter 1:10-25

#### Plug In...

“You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.” An odd command. In an odd place. Yet, zoom out a little and it does make sense.

Chapters 12-14 beat the drum that Israel must worship, not as the Canaanites do, but in the way God directs. They are not to do the practices of the Canaanites, and are constantly warned against idolatry. Even if a close friend or family member suggests straying, then the consequences are drastic ([13:10](#)). The strange law about a young goat boiled in its mother’s milk appears in [Exodus 23:19](#) and [34:26](#). Each time it finishes a sweep of laws about firstfruit offerings. Here, the following topic is a tithe to celebrate the abundance of the Lord in the presence of the Lord (14:22, 26) with a firstfruit festival coming up (chap. 16).

Exodus and Deuteronomy contrast recognition that God supplies all you need (i.e. shown through the firstfruits) over against how other religions think you secure prosperity and fertility. Throughout the Bible the Canaanite religion is depicted as one that will sacrifice children in order to prosper and survive ([12:31](#)), will do rituals under trees associated with fertility ([12:2](#)), even cut themselves to the same ends ([14:1](#) cf. Elijah’s God versus the Canaanite god, Baal, and who produced the drought breaking rain? – [1 Kings 18:16-45](#)).

Given the chapter starts with the call to be a holy people – that is, separate – and then ends the same way, the line about the young goat could be a summary picture of Canaanite religion. It captures the whole religious-philosophy in a well-known practice. It forms a transition as the chapters move from beating the drum about the danger of

idolatry to more positive chapters on all the good and freedom now to be enjoyed in the Land.

## **Chew It Over...**

The point! There is no wiggle room with God when it comes to allegiances. While there is complete forgiveness through faith and repentance, sustained dallying with other religions or philosophies of the world exposes where our hearts are at. Deal drastically today. Repent. Be holy as God is holy. ([1 Peter 1:13-16](#)).

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask Jesus to reveal the evil desires within and to enable you to cut off from them and not conform to the world. Request greater trust in all Jesus provides to make us holy.



# TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 14:22-29 & Acts 4:32-36

### Plug In...

Each year the Israelites were to reserve a tenth of their produce and take it to the place God said He would dwell. Then, feast! With family, with friends, with the poor and vulnerable, with the priests, they feasted and were satisfied.

Such an event rams home: God has blessed you thoroughly! The blessing is the enjoyment. The enjoyment is the blessing.

### Chew It Over...

God looks after everyone in His household. Many of us are blessed to receive directly from the Lord – our jobs pay well and the money turns up in our bank account. However, some don't have these direct circumstances. Yet, within the church they too should receive from God. We give to them as the agent of God. [Acts 4:32-36](#) is a picture of people who 'got it'. We must give to gospel mission, but we are to give to make sure no one amongst the church are without their basic needs. The ministry of 'Helping Hands' at The Lakes is one formal way of doing this.

### Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord to lay upon your heart your capacity to give and to whom you should help.



## WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

### Read: Deuteronomy 15:1-23 & 2 Corinthians 9

#### **Plug In...**

Some amazing laws to structure a society are given here. Laws to show that those who are redeemed are called to be free. Israelites structure life so no brother or sister, or convert to the faith, remains stuck in poverty. The point of redemption is freedom!

Despite this ideal, reality strikes. Verse 9 says be careful that a certain wicked and stingy thought doesn't arise in your heart.

The antidote is verse 15: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today."

#### **Chew It Over...**

Laws by nature get technical. It is easy to duck and weave the very point of a law but still rubber stamp that 'technically' you've obeyed the law. The net result from such moves is that some poor in Israel are not loaned the money they need to survive. The only way to circumvent this 'legal' abuse is to foster in the community a heart *for* the poor. Such that the potential lender thinks about the plight of the poor person foremost in their mind. [See how God vividly exposed this couple: [Acts 4:32 – 5:6.](#)]

God called potential lenders in Israel to 'remember that they were slaves'. We often say: "But for the grace of God go I." This phrase does not pity a person, and it is not necessarily focusing on sympathy for the person. Rather, it understands that but for the love of God upon us, then His subsequent action of generosity towards us, and then further successive generosity in supplying all we need, then we would be in the same predicament.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Pray that you might have a heart that is not tight-fisted. Pray any giving you disperse is not under compulsion, but is great because your heart has a God-like generosity.



# THURSDAY 17 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 16:1-8 & Colossians 3

### Plug In...

Chapter 15 spoke of maintaining a climate of redemption within Israel – every seven years debts are cancelled. People were redeemed by God to enjoy freedom. Given that, the Israelites are to remember annually the redemption. Two halves of one big festival are given here. The Passover (celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the Hebrew month of Nisan). Then the Festival of Unleavened Bread for the following 7 days. It culminates on the seventh day of enjoying no work.

### Chew It Over...

How do we keep preaching to ourselves we are free and bought by the blood of Christ? Given that it is remembering this which powers our capacity to love others and be generous and merciful to others ([15:15](#)), how do you preach to yourself (to remember) even beyond church on Sunday?

Let's remind ourselves of the call to set our hearts on Christ ([Colossians 3:1-4](#)) and to do that in a way that we are soaked in it – [Colossians 3:15-17](#).

### Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to embed rituals and rhythms in your life so that you never forget, so you always completely remember to rely on Jesus alone.



FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 16:9-12 & Philippians 1:3-6

### Plug In...

There were a handful of big, all-in, annual feasts/festivals that the Israelites celebrated annually. The second, is the Festival of Firstfruits (called Festival of Weeks here). At the start of the harvest, the first crop that came in would be gathered up and given to the LORD to say thanks that God had blessed them. Given it was the first of their crops, they could withhold it and be stingy, or they could give in 'faith', an anticipation that God did promise more to come and it will. This is a festival that happens inside the Land and every year.

### Chew It Over...

It is one thing to be in the wilderness trusting God's promise to take you into the Land and bless you. That trust is 'faith'. However, inside the Land, existence is still characterised by faith. Faith isn't just a post-Fall attitude and response. It is always how humanity is to relate and respond to God (think before the Fall, Adam and Eve did not have faith in God's word).

As a Christian, we understand we are *saved* by faith. We can fall into the trap of thinking that now saved, the job of growing in holiness is up to us. However, growing in holiness is *by faith alone* too. For, God promised that He will grow us in holiness. Consider your holiness quest. Are you also relying on that from the hand of God?

[Philippians 1:6](#) speaks of the firstfruits being a signpost of more to come: "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Pray for God's work in you; pray with joy when you see the partnership you and others have in the gospel cropping up.



## WEEKEND 19-20 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

### Read: Deuteronomy 16:13-17

#### Plug In...

This next festival happens at the end of the harvest. In the Bible called either the “Festival of Booths” or the “Festival of Ingathering”. This is a celebration and rejoicing that God provided the full crop He promised.

Verse 16 says that there are three annual festivals where the community gather together: Passover, Feast of Firstfruits (at the start of harvest season), Feast of Ingathering (at the end of harvest season).

All the festivals call the people to appear with the stuff God has given them and rejoice and enjoy. All these festivals are called Sabbaths and are applications of the Fourth Commandment about enjoying rest, where they are to enjoy the Sabbath and remember they were slaves but are now redeemed ([Deuteronomy 5:12-15](#)).

#### Chew It Over...

We could read these sections as law and miss the point. The festivals are moments to enjoy freedom and rest and blessings in the Land.

This has lots to say about how we approach church. “You should gather together regularly as church” can sound like ‘law’. Some respond by saying, “Going to church doesn’t make you a Christian”.

But, what type of Christian doesn’t go to church – and regularly?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask God to bring to your heart a person you know that has drifted from coming regularly to church. Ask for care and wisdom in approaching them, encouraging them to join and enjoy rejoicing in the freedom Christ has won.