



"This day we LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be a holy people to the LORD your God. It will be a sign for you, that you are a people who are loyal to the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 26:12-19
The Third Year – The Year of Tithing
October 17, 2021

¹² “When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, ¹³ then you shall say before the LORD your God: ‘I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. ¹⁴ I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’

¹⁶ “This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. ¹⁸ Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, ¹⁹ and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”

The passage before us details the final uses of the concept of the tithe to be found in the books of Moses. The first mention was in Genesis 14:20 where it says Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe of all. The passage prescribes nothing. It simply describes what occurred, and nothing more.

Further, it must be noted one last time that there is no proper doctrine known as “the law of first mention.” The reason that term was made up was certainly because some studious soul went to his pastor and said, “Why are we tithing as we are? We are a New Testament church and are not bound to the Law of Moses, are we?”

In a panic at being called out for his transgression of putting his New Testament congregation back under the law, thus being called a “heretic,” while at the same time not wanting to lose out on beating ten percent out of his congregants every chance he could get, he immediately conjured up a non-existent law, the “law of first mention” in order to justify continuing with “tithing.”

In the same chapter of Genesis where Melchizedek is mentioned, Abram’s nephew – Lot – was captured. It then says that Abram armed his servants and pursued and overtook Lot’s captives attacked them, and rescued Lot and all his goods.

If the law of first mention were true, we would then be obligated to do exactly the same for any relative of ours who found himself in a similar pickle. We would also be obligated to

circumcise our male children on the eighth day of their lives, to have a party for a child on the day it was weaned, to slaughter a calf when strangers showed up at our door, to offer our virgin daughters in place of guests in our house if the guests were threatened with being raped, and so on.

Each of these, and countless other precepts predate the Law of Moses, and they could arguably be put on the exact same level as that descriptive passage about Abram giving a tithe to Melchizedek. The thinking is perverse, and it is unsound theology – all designed to impose upon people something that would then violate other precepts found in the New Testament, such as...

Text Verse: *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7*

Mandating tithing does not lead to cheerful givers, trust me on this. For every cheerful tither, there are one thousand more that cheat on the precept, ignore the precept, feel overwhelmed by the precept, are angry about the precept, and so on.

If you are in a church where tithing is mandated, it is your responsibility to talk to the leadership and provide the proper instruction to correct this horrifying abuse of Scripture that is pounded into the heads of people who are supposed to be free in Christ from the demands of the law, and who are not to be duped into the false teaching known as “the law of first mention.”

If your pastor holds to the law of first mention, ask him if he had his son circumcised on the eighth day, because ONLY on the eighth day is it allowed. If he doesn't have a son, ask if he has preparations for his daughter to be wedded to her husband's brother if her husband dies. That is a precept that predates the Law of Moses.

If he doesn't have any children, there are plenty of other things you could ask if he is doing that are recorded in Genesis and early Exodus that he should be doing. It is unsound, it is hypocritical, and it should not be tolerated within the church.

As for tithing under the law, we will briefly evaluate that one last time in our passage today. If a pastor is adamant in shoving his congregants back under the law to tithe, then he needs to abide by what the law says. We'll see if that is a tenable option for him today as well.

Great things such as “NO TITHING FOR NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS” are 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 Holiness (verses 12-15)

¹² “When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase

ki tekaleh laser eth kal masar tebuatekha – “When you complete to tithe all tithe of your increase.” Notice the lack of any article before “tithe” – “all tithe.” The use of the article has been precise and meticulous in all of the tithing verses found in the previous sections that dealt with this issue.

Moses is instructing the people concerning “tithes.” It is a precept that was mandated for the people of Israel. Every year, the people of Israel were to set aside a tenth, a tithe, of their increase. That was first noted, within the law, in Leviticus 27 –

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. It is holy to the LORD.” Leviticus 27:30

In that verse, no article is used. “And all tithe of the land.” It is this that is “holy to the Lord.” Nothing was said of what should be done with it. It simply says that tithes were holy to the Lord. Numbers 18:21-32 then details how tithes, the tithes which they offer up as a heave offering to the Lord (Numbers 18:24), are to be apportioned to the Levites, and from that a portion (a tithe of the tithe) is to be given to the priests.

The use of the article, or the lack of it – in each instance – is expressive of what is to occur. Tithes are to be set aside as holy to the Lord. Those offered as a heave offering are to be given to the Levites. But Numbers does not say what is to happen to those not offered up as heave offerings to the Lord. That is only explained later, in Deuteronomy.

It is in Deuteronomy 14:22-29 that the disposition of those not offered up as a heave offering is noted. For a bit of comical relief and as a poke at “tithing” pastors, we will journey there one last time and read that passage –

“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. ²³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. ²⁴ But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, ²⁵ then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ²⁶ And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there

before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.”
Deuteronomy 14:22-27

It is clear and precise – party time has arrived, and the tithes are the means by which it will come about. The Lord provided the tithes, and it is His will that they be used to glorify Him through rejoicing in His provision. With that stated, the chapter closed out with these words –

“At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. ²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” Deuteronomy 14:28, 29

It is that final passage of Deuteronomy that Moses now readdresses one last time, hoping that in the dispensation of grace that was to come in Christ, pastors wouldn't make the galactically huge error of reimposing tithing on their congregation, but if they did, they would at least do it in accord with the law and not in accord with their own corrupt agenda. As he next says...

¹² (con't) **in the third year**

ba'shanah ha'shelishit – “In the year, the third.” Now, there is a distinction being made between the first two years and the third year. All tithes are to be laid aside, but in the third year, there are specific provisions to be adhered to. It is this third year that is...

¹² (con't) —**the year of tithing**—

Almost all translations state it this way, and such a translation would cause a contradiction to occur. Every year is a year of tithing. That has already been made explicit. A tithe was to be set aside every year as holy to the Lord. The Hebrew says: shenat ha'maaser – “year the tithe.” The article is again expressive.

This clause and the previous clause are in apposition, restating and explaining the other. The Greek translation adds in the words, “the second tithe,” which are not found in the Hebrew. This was certainly translated by rabbi Reuben who didn't want to lose out on milking his synagogue of any of his desired portion. The word “second” cannot even be inferred in the Hebrew.

Even Cambridge notes that, saying, “a reading which even after the vocalic changes which it involves in the Heb. results in an impossible construction.” Rather, the text has been very clear with each stage of the development of the tithing guidelines.

Of this tithe, the third-year tithe, Moses next says words that are in accord with the words of Deuteronomy 14, repeating them to ensure clarity concerning the precept so that it is understood...

12 (con't) and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,

The thought is substantially repeated from Deuteronomy 14:29, saying, “And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates...”

Moses is taking care to make it understood that these people, who had no ability to otherwise take care of themselves, would be tended to according to the riches of the blessings of the Lord upon the people of Israel. They were in deprivation, and the year of the tithe was given...

12 (con't) so that they may eat within your gates and be filled,

Again, the words follow after verse 14:29, where a blessing is included for the people when they observe the precept. There it says, “may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

In this, they will be observant of the command already set forth. And they are then to acknowledge that the reason was for exactly that purpose. It is not a single purpose, as has already been defined, but for the purpose of the tithe in general, meaning all three years of the tithe. That cannot be misunderstood when the next verses are properly considered. As Moses first notes...

13 then you shall say before the LORD your God:

This would be at the pilgrim feasts.

13 (con't) 'I have removed the holy tithe from my house,

biarti ha'qodesh min ha'bayit – “I have burnt away the holiness from the house.” The word ba'ar is used. It is the same word used when speaking of purging away evil and purging away guilt. The tithe is holy and thus it is to be considered as such. It would be evil to use it for non-holy purposes.

The words “from my house” are clear. The tithes were kept there until they were to be dispensed with. Two years it was for magnificent partying in the presence of the Lord, and the third year it was to be transferred to the storehouses for the care of those to whom it was set apart for. The latter of those two uses is again stated by Moses...

13 (con't) and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,

It is the explicitly stated and now repeated mandate for the third-year tithe. But it is not the whole mandate for the three years of tithes. This third-year mandate is for the care of those to whom it is designated. With that again understood, the proclamation of the Israelite continues with...

13 (con't) according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me;

The translation is exactly correct. What is notable, is that the commandments for the tithe are almost all given by Moses, and yet the acknowledgment to the Lord is that they are commands asher tsivitani, or “which You [the Lord] have commanded me.” It once again speaks of the process of divine inspiration. What Moses has put forth is, in fact, the revealed word of God.

13 (con't) I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.

lo avarti mimitsvotekha – “no have I passed over from your commandments.” The word avar is closely associated with the word ivrim or Hebrew, and this is certainly why Moses says this. A true Hebrew would not cross over the laws of the Lord, but would stay on the side of them that he belonged. He would remember them and not forget.

With that stated, we come to the words of the next verse which clearly and unambiguously reveal to us that there was not a “second” tithe, and that the “holy tithe” mentioned here is the same as that referred to in Leviticus 27:30, the one tithe of Israel which is said to be “holy to the Lord.” The Israelite continues, saying...

14 I have not eaten any of it when in mourning,

lo akalti b’oni mimenu – “No I have eaten in my affliction from it.” The very fact that Moses brings up eating the tithe in affliction (mourning) means that, at times, the tithe was to be eaten by the individual. If it was not ever to be eaten, Moses would have simply said, “I have not eaten any of it.” What he is referring to is what it says in verse 14:26 –

“...you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.” Deuteronomy 14:26

They are commanded to rejoice in the presence of the Lord. This clause now acknowledges that the person has done so. If he were in mourning, he would not be allowed to eat of the tithe. This is what is alluded to in Hosea 9 –

“They shall not offer wine offerings to the LORD, Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him. It shall be like bread of mourners to them; All who eat it shall be defiled. For their bread shall be for their own life; It shall not come into the house of the LORD.” Hosea 9:4

The bread of mourners is that of eating at a funeral. It is a time of loss and despondency. The tithe was not to be used for such a purpose because the tithe anticipates Christ.

The tenth is the Lord’s claim on the whole. To eat this holy portion in mourning would be equivalent to a Christian being in mourning over being saved. The thought would be confused, contradictory, and quite possibly Calvinist – but there is no place for it in the faith. Christ is the Victor over death. In His presence is to be joy and rejoicing forevermore. Next, he is to say...

14 (con’t) nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use,

v’lo viarti mimenu b’tame – “and no have I burnt it in unclean.” It is the same verb just used in verse 13, ba’ar – to burn away. This is still referring to the person using his own tithes in the first two years. An unclean person was not to enter the presence of the Lord. If he were unclean according to Levitical law, he could not legally participate in the festivities where the tithes were consumed.

14 (con’t) nor given any of it for the dead.

It does not say, “the dead.” It says: v’lo nathathi mimenu l’met – “and not I give from it to dead.” This is not speaking of offering it to dead people as some scholars claim. That would always be forbidden, and it is unnecessary to be stated here.

Rather, it is referring to providing it for those who are in mourning for the dead, such as is seen in Jeremiah 16 where no article is used before “dead,” despite the translation –

“Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. ⁷ Nor shall men break bread in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother.”
Jeremiah 16:6, 7

The tithe is not symbolic of a consolation for dead people. It is representative of Christ, the Victor over death, and of His claim upon those who come to Him. The typology must be maintained. In all of this, the Israelite is to acknowledge...

14 (con’t) I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.

The tithe was to be used two years in a row at times of thanks, rejoicing, holiness, and purity in the presence of God. In the third year, it was to be presented to those to whom the Lord, through Moses, designated. In obeying these rules, the Israelite could then be satisfied that he had met the commandments accordingly, and could then petition the Lord for blessing...

15 Look down from Your holy habitation,

hashqipha mimeon qadshekha – “Look down from habitation your holy.” Here is a new word, maon, or “habitation.” It signifies a dwelling place. It can refer to the dwelling place of the Lord, the home of a man, the den of an animal, and so on. The words of this clause are then explained by the next...

15 (con’t) from heaven,

min ha’shemayim – “from the heavens.” The Lord is above, even if his tabernacle is among Israel – be it in Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, or Jerusalem. He dwells in the heavens, and the request is for Him to look down from there and notice the obedience of His people and to respond...

15 (con’t) and bless Your people Israel

The way the words are structured, it both unites the two objects while having one define the other: u-barekh eth amekha eth Yisrael – “and bless [in the direction of] Your people, [in the direction of] Israel.” Thus, it is affirming that “Your people” are, in fact, “Israel.” And more...

15 (con’t) and the land which You have given us,

v’eth ha’adamah asher nathatah lanu – “And [in the direction of] the ground which You have given to us.” This is a specific request for blessing upon the ground, meaning the soil.

In other words, “You have blessed us with the produce of the ground. We have divided out the holy portion, and we have handled the holy portion according to the instructions You have provided. As such, we ask that you bless the ground from which it came, so that we can then repeat the process according to Your goodness...”

15 (con’t) just as You swore to our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

This is now the fourth of six times this particular phrase is used in Deuteronomy. The word here is different than the preceding clause. There, it spoke of the ground. Here it speaks of the land, meaning the territory, which comprises Israel’s inheritance. The petition is for the ground to prosper in the land in which the Lord said it would prosper.

The Lord promised a land of blessing and abundance, that has been received, and in their obedience to the word, it is petitioned for continued blessing from the land. With that, the long, detailed, and meticulous words concerning the tithes of Israel come to a close. If you missed the previous sermons which built up to this section, it would be worth your time to go back and watch each in order.

So now, you are fully versed on the matter. If you have a pastor (Chinsy Chadwick) who pushes tithing, you are to tell him it is an Old Testament, Law of Moses, precept. If he says, "But tithing predates the law and thus falls under the law of first mention," you are instructed on how to correct his thinking.

And if he still insists on tithing, then tell him that he must only expect ten percent every third year, and you will think of him and toss him a bone while you are partying with your other two years of tithes. Or, better, find a church where grace is taught in all matters and forget those who pick and choose what they will and will not teach that is in accordance with proper doctrine.

I will rejoice in the Lord my God
I will bless His holy name at all times
Giving thanks to Him along life's path I trod
Blessing Him in my heart, with songs and rhymes

I will offer my offering as is just and right
And I will do so without compulsion, but with joy in heart
My hand will be open, not shut up tight
Praises and blessings and honor to Him, and that is just the start

How the Lord has blessed my soul
And I shall forever be grateful to Him for this
Towards Him shall I all of my praises roll
And never a chance to praise Him shall I miss

II. His Special People (verses 16-19)

¹⁶ "This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments;

The words are more precise, saying, "the statutes, these, and the judgments." He has carefully set forth the two as being required but being different things.

As far as the term, “this day,” Moses has used it numerous times already in Deuteronomy. Each speaks of the timeframe of the giving out of the laws he set forth, not necessarily any single day.

The words now sum up the body of law that has been given so far by him. A new flavor of words, and a new direction in what is stated will come forth starting in Chapter 27, and so what Moses says here serves as a closing thought to this section.

In saying, “This day the Lord commands you,” it is not merely saying, “Ok, today the Lord is telling you these things.” Rather, it is a way of saying, “This is your law. Each day that you live under it, you are commanded to observe what is herein stated.”

Taken from the hearer’s perspective, it isn’t just, “Moses told us while we were by the Jordan to do these things.” Rather, it is “Moses is telling us, right now, to do these things.” This is why the prophets could speak of the law as “right now” when they spoke to Israel. And this is why Jesus spoke to the people in the same manner –

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” ²⁷ So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸ And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” Luke 10:25-28

The law was given, and it continued to be given from itself to the people. As such...

^{16 (con’t)} **therefore you shall be careful to observe them**

The words now refer back to “the statutes, these, and the judgments” of the previous clause. Moses says, “and you shall keep, and you shall do.” The statutes are to be kept, and the judgments are to be obeyed.

But, as seen elsewhere, this is not just rote observance that Moses is calling for. There is to be both an appreciation of who gave them, and a willingness to observe them because of who He is. As such, Israel is to keep and do them...

^{16 (con’t)} **with all your heart and with all your soul.**

One can love in varying degrees. What the Lord calls for is to love Him entirely, both with the intellect and reason, and also with that which animates the person in his walk before the Lord.

To be fully obedient to the law with one’s intellect (meaning the heart) but without the soul (that which animates him), reveals a person who sees the law as a means to an end. “I will

obey the law as it is written, and it will be my means of salvation, even if I don't excel at it. I will just do what is necessary."

To be obedient to the law with one's soul (that which animates the person in deed and action) but not with the heart (the intellect) reveals a person filled with pride concerning his accomplishment of the law, even without any true regard for the Lord. His deeds are rote observance and legalistic. He crosses every i and dots every t... wait, switch that. And because he is so good at doing it, he can look down on others. He is like the Pharisee.

A person who observes the law with the heart and the soul is a person who is both in love with the law, and who desires to live out the law because of the One who gave him the law.

Such a person, because he both wants to do the law, and who aggressively tries to do the law, will also be the person who knows he fails in fulfilling the law. But, in his knowledge of this, he knows that his efforts are not futile because the law provides for his failings.

¹⁷ Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God,

The translation by the NKJV is possible, but more likely the words are causative: *eth Yehovah he-emarta ha'yom lihyot lekha l'elohim* – "Yehovah you have caused to say today to you to be to God." In other words, "Today, you have caused Yehovah to say to you that He will be your God."

This doesn't mean they actually caused it, but by agreeing to the covenant, it has brought them into a legal standing with Him to be their God. As a consequence of this, the obligation then rests on Israel to meet their obligations to Him...

^{17 (con't)} and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice.

It more precisely reads in three successive thoughts, "[1] and to walk in His ways, [2] and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments, and [3] and to hear His voice." To walk in His ways is to emulate Him, e.g. – "You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45).

To keep His statutes, commandments, and judgments, is to be obedient to Him, e.g. – "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again" (Deuteronomy 22:4).

To hear His voice is to hearken unto what He says, e.g. – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place’” (Jeremiah 7:3).

Each aspect is a part of the expected whole. The covenant begins with Moses, but it does not end with Him. Thus, the words here are wholly dependent on the coming of Messiah. The Lord has spoken the words wholly in the singular – “you Israel.”

Because of this, and because the word is new every day to the people, the words must be fulfilled every day. Any day they are not so fulfilled is the failure of Israel to meet the demands of this verse – meaning they never could, ever. As such, the anticipation is the True Israel – Messiah – who would do what Israel is unable to do.

That is more assuredly evidenced in the next words...

¹⁸ Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people,

Again, the words are causative: v’Yehovah he-emirekha ha’yom lihyot lo l’am segulah – “And Yehovah has caused you to say today to be to Him to people possession.” In the agreement of the covenant, the people are caused to agree to the Lord – “We are your special possession.”

The word is segulah. It signifies possession or property, coming from an unused root meaning “to shut up” as in wealth. One would take something precious, like treasure, and shut it up and keep it close by. Thus, it is variously translated as peculiar treasure, possession, jewels, special possession, and so on.

As far as the translation, the Lord “caused” you to say, it’s not that the Lord actually made them say it, but in the offer of the covenant, and in its acceptance, the statement is affirmed. This idea of being His possession was first promised in Exodus 19 –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.” Exodus 19:5

It was then restated in Deuteronomy 7 –

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6

To get what is being said, and it is complicated, you would need to review the Deuteronomy 7 sermon. Israel is a holy people, even if they act in an unholy manner. God has set them apart

as holy, that does not change. But they still must be holy, a state that is dependent on their actions. That is then seen in the next words...

18 (con't) just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments,

More precisely: "According to which He spoke to you, and to keep all His commandments." The covenant was made, Israel was caused to be His people, just as the Lord spoke to him, which is based upon 1) His declaration of them as a holy (set apart) people, and 2) the keeping of the commandments.

But Israel consistently failed to keep the commandments, even to this day they fail to do so. In order to be set apart as holy, and to be actually holy, Israel must keep the commandments. But in failing to do so, there is a disconnect.

That disconnect remained and remains without Messiah. But in Messiah, that disconnect no longer exists. This is not because of their keeping of the commandments, but because of His. That final and glorious state is seen in the final verse of the Chapter...

19 and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made,

u-l'titekha elyon al kal ha'goyim asher asah – "And He will set you uppermost above all the nations which He has made." It is not that Israel will just be above the nations, but at the very top of them." The word Moses uses, elyon, is used to describe the Lord God at times, el elyon, or "God Most High."

As this has never been fulfilled, then it is a messianic verse which anticipates what lies ahead, even now. Its fulfillment is prophesied by Isaiah –

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore." Isaiah 2:2-4

The fact that Christ has come, and that He has called for Himself a special people in the church, does not negate a literal fulfillment of these prophecies. The promises are to Israel, and they will be fulfilled. This is not for their sake, but for His toward them...

¹⁹ (con't) **in praise, in name, and in honor,**

lithilah, u-l'shem, u-l'tipharet – “to praise, to name, to beauty.” Jeremiah uses these same words, saying –

“For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,’ says the LORD, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.’” Jeremiah 13:11

The covenant was made, and the Lord bound Israel to it, like a sash upon Himself. But despite His efforts, they would not do exactly as is conveyed in these words of Deuteronomy.

Thus, there is the need for something new, something better, in order to resolve the dilemma. Israel could not help but to fail. The infection of sin is too deep. But the promises will be fulfilled, not through their effort, but through His. We can look back on this and know it now, but for them – even to this day – it is all about them...

***¹⁹ (fin) and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”**

Jeremiah shows that Israel failed in this. Peter, speaking to the Jews who have come to Christ, cites a combination of the words of verses 18 and 19 in his first epistle, saying –

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” 1 Peter 2:9, 10

Paul uses the same word in Ephesians 1:14 concerning the Gentiles who have been brought into the commonwealth of Israel. We have become a possession of the Lord through obedience to, meaning calling on, Christ. More directly, however, Paul uses the phrase in Titus 2 –

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”
Titus 2:11-14

These words of the New Testament clearly show that the church fills a special role, but it does not necessarily follow then that the church has replaced Israel. The church – those of Jews and

Gentiles – are received as a people, but Israel – the nation – has been selected as a special people.

The church has a mission to perform during this dispensation, but Israel still has the right to the prophecies spoken to her that will come to pass in their due time. The Gentile-led church is grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, but it does not replace the nation in the process. We simply share in the good that has been promised to them.

When Israel, as a nation, calls out to Christ, that promised day will come, and the words of these verses, and of the prophets to come, will come to pass. As far as when this will take place, that is at the Lord's discretion and the matter belongs to Him alone. But because the people have been rejoined with the land, that day is closer than most probably realize.

Those who understand the times in which we live can look to Israel and know that God has it all under control. Christ Jesus is the key to the entire scenario, both the current state of things as well as the prophetic scenario that is waiting to be unfolded and realized in its fulness.

The wonder and marvel of both sections of our verses today is that God is doing something wonderful in the world – reconciling man to Himself through the offering of His Son. The types, patterns, covenants, and promises are all based on this thought.

The glory of God in Christ is the glory of God above, in, and through creation. All of the glory of God that we can, or ever will perceive, is because of what He has done through Him. Praise be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing Verse: *“At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes,’ Says the LORD.” Zephaniah 3:20*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 27:1-10 To build this is a lot of work... grunts and groans (An Altar of Stones) (75th 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.

The Third Year – The Year of Tithing

“When you have finished laying aside
All the tithe of your increase in the third year
-----the year of tithing, so it is billed

And have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless
-----and the widow
So that they may eat within your gates and be filled

Then you shall say before the LORD your God:
'I have removed the holy tithe from my house, as told to do
And also have given them to the Levite
To the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow too

According to all Your commandments
Which You have commanded me
I have not transgressed Your commandments
Nor have I forgotten them, as you can see

I have not eaten any of it when in mourning
Nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use
-----nor given any of it for the dead
I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God
And have done according to all that You have commanded me
-----just as You have said

Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless
Your people Israel and the land which You have given us
Just as You swore to our fathers
'A land flowing with milk and honey
-----blessings and blessings and plus, plus, plus

"This day the LORD your God commands you
To observe these statutes and judgments, not in part but in whole
Therefore you shall be careful to observe them
With all your heart and with all your soul

Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God
And that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes
----- such has been your choice
His commandments, and His judgments
And that you will obey His voice

Also today the LORD has proclaimed you
To be His special people, just as He promised you
That you should keep all His commandments

So you are to do

And that He will set you high above all nations
Which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor
----- such shall be the token

And that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God
Just as He has spoken

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

Hallelujah and Amen...