

Right or Wrong? A Question for Church Members

Harmony M.B.C., September 6, 2009 (Evening)

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Deu 12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

Deu 12:6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

Deu 12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Deu 12:8 Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.

Deu 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

Deu 12:10 But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;

Deu 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

Deu 12:12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

Deu 12:13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:

Deu 12:14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

In the days of these writings, being a citizen of Israel meant that the privileges which God extended to that Jewish nation were privileges which you were allowed to enjoy. You enjoyed the privilege of having the only form of worship outlined by God Himself. You enjoyed the privilege of knowing that the one true God had taken it upon Himself to be with you and your nation. You enjoyed the privilege of having a life plan outlined and described for you by the living God who knew all things, determined all things, and provided for all things you might need in your life of service to Him. You enjoyed the privilege of sharing common beliefs about God, of sharing common teachings at the hand of God's servants, and of expecting common blessings along with the rest of the obedient house of Israel. This was your legacy as a descendant of Jacob.

In our text, Moses had concerns about a certain disorder in worship that, of necessity, took place in the wilderness. God had laid down precise instructions for how the children of Israel were to conduct their worship services. They were precise right down to the time of sacrifices, the kind of offerings to be made, how and where they were to be made, and what the mental, physical, and spiritual condition of the worshiper was supposed to be when engaged in worship or service

to God. However, apparently because of the migratory nature of the tribes it was not possible to always observe these things in the precise way they were described by the Lord. This is the reason for Moses' message. The gist of that message can be summarized like this:
When they got settled in the Promised Land they should not then allow themselves any of these deviations from the precision of worship that God had outlined
To do so was, as Moses stated it, every man doing "whatsoever was right in his own eyes."

This account has a message for us as God's chosen people today. What is that message?

I. Church membership is a privilege of grace given to us of the Lord.

- Not everyone you know is a member of one of the Lord's churches
 - > 1Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

II. Being set in a place of true worship; the church of Jesus Christ; we have the unique privilege of having the only method of worship and service that is expressly outlined and approved by the Lord

III. Being the church of Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of knowing that God has taken it upon Himself to be with us specifically, and in a sense, exclusively

IV. Being a member of the Lord's church, we have the privilege of knowing that the omnipotent, omniscient God has outlined a life plan for us and has taken care of every contingency we face while living that life plan.

V. Being members of the Lord's church, we have the privilege of being recipients of God's teaching through the written Word and through the ministry of the Lord's teachers.

VI. Coming to the knowledge that we have been treated as special by the Lord, we should inventory how we are conducting ourselves in regard to religious things, things of service and things of worship. vv. 5-7

- Moses says that when they have entered that good land (type: spiritual maturity) they are to stop the irregularities they were practicing in their religion.
 - > When we plan to come before God to worship, it should be at the place appointed by the Lord for us...that place is the church where we are members.
 - > Every act of worship or service should be associated with His church (vv. 6-7, 13-14)
 - > We must not set up what is right in our own eyes above what is known to be the truth about worship and service as God has ordered it. v. 8
 - There is a fundamental message about this in
 - 1Cor. 10:31-32 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:
 - There is also a message to the wise in Philippians 1:10 about choosing the truth of God as a guide about the right way of worship; choosing it over what seems right in our own eyes (which is another way of saying that we rationalize things we do that are irregular or just plain wrong): "That ye may approve things that are excellent;

that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ;”