

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for April 3:

Deuteronomy 23:1-25:19:

We are now in a section of the legal stipulations in Deuteronomy that appears to have no order to it. If there was an order evident to the original readers, it has been lost to us. The one common theme in today's reading is that of how various people are to be treated. As such, the laws we read of today may be an exposition of the second half of the Ten Commandments (those dealing with how we treat others).

Here are some of the highlights: Particular people are excluded from assembling together with Israel to worship the LORD since they would be seen as less-than-whole and/or as part of a people who had set themselves against Yahweh, including those who have been emasculated for pagan purposes, Ammonites and Moabites who opposed Yahweh and His people when they wanted to travel through their lands (cf. Deuteronomy 25:17-19 [although this ban was not total since Ruth was a Moabitess]), but not Edomites or Egyptians (23:1-8); laws about what is clean and unclean still apply even when Israel is at war since exceptions will not be made (23:9-14); and many laws are set forth which emphasize love, compassion, and holiness toward fellow Israelites and even non-Israelites who are living among them (23:15-25:19). Of special interest in this last grouping are laws prohibiting remarriage of a former spouse so that marriages did not degenerate into some kind of wife swapping (24:1-4), Levirate (from Latin *levir* meaning brother-in-law) marriage laws which called upon a dead man's brother to take his wife to provide for her and carry on the name (25:5-10), and a prohibition against unjust business practices (25:13-16).

Luke 10:13-37:

Having sent the seventy-two disciples out on a short-term missions trip and explained to them what to do when people reject them (10:1-12), Jesus went on to denounce some towns who had been able to see many of Jesus' miracles and hear His teaching in Galilee—making it clear that they will be judged more severely than others since they have seen more, they have been able to witness the acts and teachings of Messiah! (10:13-16)

As the seventy-two return and rejoice in what happened on their missions trip, Jesus knows that significant things happened, Satan's authority over people has been broken, yet He reminds the disciples that what is the greatest reality in their lives is not these wonderful things which happened, but that their names are written in heaven. This seems to be a reminder to us never to take for granted that God has saved us by His grace! (10:17-20) This moves Jesus to praise the Father that He revealed the truth of His kingdom to these disciples who have child-life faith (10:21-24). In this text Jesus makes it clear that people are saved due to God's sovereign grace, not due to foreseen faith or man's ability. This passage should move us to praise and thanksgiving that God has saved us in Jesus Christ! Surely we did not deserve it!

In 10:25-37 we find another treatment of how those who know and follow Jesus Christ are to treat and reach out to others. A law expert sought to test and most likely entrap

Jesus by asking him how to inherit eternal life. After Jesus asked the man what is written in the law, he answered Jesus with the same law summary Jesus has given—namely, love God with all you have and your neighbor as yourself (cf. Matthew 22:34-40). Jesus affirmed his answer since He knows that for one to do this, he must come to saving faith. The young man, however, did not want to leave it there since he had been so shaped by current Jewish practice (everyone knew, so he thought, this does not mean you have to love everyone, for everyone is not your neighbor, it is only an exclusive few). So, he asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan in which He makes a despised Samaritan (in the eyes of Jew) the hero of the story and two Jewish leaders the villains. Jesus did not answer, “Who is my neighbor?” Instead, He focused on how to be a neighbor to anyone and everyone whom we encounter. The point was that love of God and others which derives from true repentance and saving faith will result in this kind of life. By this parable Jesus exposed the lack of faith and love in the man’s heart. And, He cuts to the quick of our hearts and whether or not we have trusted Him and, as a result, are willing to love all and anyone He brings our way.

Psalm 75:1-10:

Asaph (a Levitical music leader) writes this psalm praising and thanking God that as the Sovereign of the universe, He will take care of the righteous and judge the wicked. Though we do not know what the specific event was which led to this psalm, nevertheless, it moves us to look to our God who reigns over all and is in control over all when we face hard or unjust situations. Our hope is in Him!

Proverbs 12:12-13:

Those who don’t know God and thus walk the way of the wicked long for the things that evil people long for and thus that is what they get and produce. On the other hand, those who know God, walk in His way, and are righteous, bring forth a very different kind of fruit or effect. This also extends to the kinds of things they say.