

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing Part V: Specific Treaty Stipulations Of The Great King, Deuteronomy 12-26 G. Heeding God's Ways Regarding Effective Human Leadership, Deuteronomy 16:1-18:22 1. Heeding God On Nurturing One's Inner Man As The Head Of A Household (Deuteronomy 16:1-17)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A significant vacuum of stable, edifying male leadership in the home exists in today's world:

(1) This vacuum exists among business executives in the upper levels of society: Holman W. Jenkins, Jr.'s "Business World" column in The Wall Street Journal, September 7-8, 2013, p. A15, in his article, "When Executives Kill Themselves," reported on two recent "suicides by high-flying Swiss executives," Pierre Wauthier, CFO of Zurich and Carsten Schloter, chief of Swisscom. Both had "a good job, good health" and "plenty of money." (Ibid.)

Incredibly, "Mr. Wauthier had options: walking away, taking a vacation, handing off some of his duties to a colleague" so "(t)he option he picked speaks mostly to a colossal failure of perspective." (Ibid.) Mr. Schloter's suicide occurred according to "interviews published . . . before his death" due to "stress and loss of perspective." (Ibid.)

(2) This vacuum of edifying male leadership in the home has long existed at the grassroots level of society: David Blankenhorn's article, "Life Without Father," in the February 24-26, 1995 issue of USA Weekend, p. 4-5 claimed that "(f)atherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation . . . It is . . . the engine driving our most urgent social problems, from crime to adolescent pregnancy to domestic violence."

Need: *So we ask, "With today's vacuum of stable, edifying male leadership in the home, what can I do about it?!"*

- I. Deuteronomy 16:1-17 taught Israel's men to be devoted to God over idols for their personal edification:**
- A. Since Deuteronomy 16:1-17 is part of the Deuteronomy chapters 12-26 specific treaty stipulations (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 260) that were not an exhaustive list of God's laws, but instructed Israel on specific spiritual challenges she would face upon entering the land of Canaan (Ibid., p 283; Deuteronomy 4:1), the lure to follow false Baals over trusting God for rain and idolizing possessions (see our lesson out of Deuteronomy 14:22-29) tempted Israel's **male heads of households** in **PARTICULAR** to lose a **proper perspective** in their roles, thus **impacting** their marriages, families and nation to head into idolatry and divine judgment!
- B. Accordingly, for three feasts out of the year, **all** of the nation's **male heads of households** were to appear at the tabernacle in God's presence -- at the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] that came fifty days later and at the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall, Deuteronomy 16:1-16a,b:
1. The Hebrew noun for "males" in Deuteronomy 16:16 KJV, ESV, *zakur*, is used **exclusively** in Scripture for **adult men** as *opposed* to **boys in childhood**, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 271.
 2. Since these "males" were to bring donations to God at the above-named feasts according to how the Lord had blessed them in their incomes (Deut. 16:17), these were employed adult men, or **heads of households**.
- C. This command directly countered the temptation Israel's heads of households would face in Canaan toward turning personally idolatrous with its unedifying, distorted perspective and negative impact on home life:
1. Two emphases **repeatedly** occur in the Deuteronomy 16:1-17 **context** on the feasts Israel's heads of households were to attend -- (a) **God's redemption of Israel from Egypt** (Deut. 16:1b, 3b, 3c, 6c and 12) and the **need to worship the Lord in the place of His choice** (Deut. 16:2b, 6a, 7a, 11b, 15a and 16a).
 2. Not only to these men, but to all the surrounding pagan nations, these emphases coupled with the above-named feasts testified that **Israel's God was to be worshiped above any other idolatrous entity:**
 - a. Rahab the harlot in pagan Jericho testified in Joshua 2:10-11 that by God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, and Israel's later conquest of the Amorites Sihon and Og east of the Jordan River revealed that Israel's God was **not** just a **local** deity, but the Lord of **heaven and earth above all local deities!** If God had given Israel victory over Egypt and its gods at the Red Sea, if He had done the same for Israel over the gods and people of Sihon and Og **even east** of the Jordan on the **other side** of **Canaan** from the Red Sea, the Canaanites knew that they and their gods were **also** doomed for defeat before Israel!
 - b. When the Philistines captured the ark of God in the days of Israel's judges, and He plagued them, the Philistine priests and diviners warned their leaders that many years before God had plagued the Egyptians and their gods by plagues (cf. Exodus 12:12) until they had released Israel from bondage. Thus, they advised the Philistine lords to release the ark of God and return it to Israel, 1 Samuel 6:2-8.

- c. Also, God's call for Israel's men to meet in the place of **His choice** signaled He was above false **local Baals** as the God of heaven and earth, so the emphasis on the **place** the men were to worship carried an anti-idolatrous thrust. Thus, as the Feast of Passover recalled God's redemption of Israel from Egypt, God wanted all Israel's **male heads of households** to honor that feast to **recall God** was **greater** than **all the false gods in Canaan** so that they **NOT worship such false gods**, Deuteronomy 16:1b, 3b, 3c, 6c and 12.
- d. The feasts of Weeks and of Tabernacles highlighted harvesting -- the Feast of Weeks at the start of the grain harvests was called the "feast of harvest, the firstfruits," and the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall was called the "feast of ingathering," Exodus 23:16; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 144. Thus, the focus of these feasts was on **God** as the **Sole Provider** of **ALL** Israel's **crops in contrast** to the false **Baal** gods of Canaan or one's making a **god** out of the crop **productions themselves**, thus directing Israel's **male heads of households** to look to **God** and neither the **Baals** nor their **acquired goods** for **livelihood stability!**

II. Then, as all the heads of households were to GATHER before God to FOCUS on TRUSTING HIM, their MUTUAL FELLOWSHIP served to ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER to TRUST GOD, and their GENEROUS GIVING to God SOLIDIFIED a HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE in their influence in the home:

- A. The fact that God wanted **all** the heads of households to gather at **His tabernacle** three times a year meant **He** wanted them **to meet TOGETHER** with **MUTUAL EDIFICATION in their faith in Him.** (Deut. 16:16)
- B. Then, as God had **each** man **GIVE** as **God** had **prospered** him (Deut. 16:17), **each** was to see **his own need to TRUST** God's **future** supply so he would give **generously**, leading to a **healthy perspective** in his **role** and **INFLUENCE** as the **head** of his **household** (our lesson on this healthy generosity in Deuteronomy 15:1-23)!

Lesson: God had ALL Israel's MALE HEADS of HOUSEHOLD gather at His tabernacle three times a year to focus on HIM as the PROVIDER of ALL their LIVELIHOOD NEEDS, that they might INFLUENCE each other to FOCUS on the LORD as their HELP and DONATE to Him GENEROUSLY with its OWN EDIFYING NURTURE that they would be EDIFIED to FUNCTION as SOLIDLY GODLY MALE LEADERS in the HOME.

Application: May we (1) trust in Christ as Savior to be saved, John 1:11-12. Then, may (2) we male heads of households (a) trust in God alone for our livelihoods, (b) not forsaking the meeting of ourselves together with other men of like faith and (c) donating generously to God's interests for healthy inner blessing (d) that we might retain a stable, healthy focus on the Lord and so influence our homes unto stable faith in the Lord for blessing!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

On Wednesday, September 4, 2013 when our former car was in the repair shop, and I didn't know if it was worth repairing due to the car's high mileage, I faced several temptations toward unbelief that threatened to dilute my perspective and thus hinder my function as a leader in my family and my workplace: (1) Our Church Men's Retreat was set for that following Friday and Saturday, and I had to attend it, so if either my car was not repaired or I had not acquired another car by then, I had to keep paying for the pricey rental I had over the weekend, a chilling thought that could significantly inhibit my function as a pastor at the retreat! (2) The repair shop, deluged with work, was unable even to check my former car that Wednesday, and (3) I was suffering from an infection that stress-induced higher blood sugar only made worse, leaving me wondering how to address it with its costs could I even get to a doctor!

I then read the article, "Diary of a hunting trip" in the August 2013 New Tribes Mission's circular, "NTM @ work," p. 5. It was a three-day diary of a hunting trip by Pupuiye, a Moi tribal believer who lived in the Asia-Pacific region half a world away, and it told how he prayed daily to God to acquire the game he needed for his livelihood, and one part hit me hard: it read, "Creator, take my body because it's Yours. I say that to you in order to do what you want for me." I took my cue from this statement to trust God with my **own** physical body issue I then faced as I followed God's leading to acquire my **own** "game" of a workable car that I needed for sustaining my own livelihood!

On Thursday, God led us to buy another car, drive it out of the dealership and get rid of the old one. He put us in touch with a doctor who, without charge, explained my physical problem and encouraged us to keep doing what we were doing to address it. Early Friday, I returned the rental, so all the stress ebbed and my perspective was preserved!

I needed the input from fellow believer and head of household, Pupuiye, a tribal man half a world away, to keep an upright perspective on faith in God so I could effectively function in my roles here in Connecticut.

May we (1) trust in Christ as Savior. Then, (2) may we male heads of households (a) trust in God as our Sole livelihood Source and (b) interact with other men of like faith for mutual edification in the nurturing of good leadership perspectives! (3) If we are NOT male heads of households, (a) may we encourage men we know to take steps "(1)" and "(2)" above, and (b) disciple our sons and boys we know toward the same goals!