

The Daily Press

Ben Laning

July 8- Read Numbers 29

According to Matthew Henry, the Israelites had more ceremonies and special events in the seventh month than in any other. There appears to be a few different reasons for this. First, this month was the first month of the year until it changed when the Israelites came out of Egypt. Second, it was during this month that slaves were set free in the Year of Jubilee, so other things were planned to coincide with that event. Third, the people had more leisure time during the seventh month than they did at most other times in the year, because it was between planting and harvesting.

Matthew Henry goes on to point out that the Israelites focused on growing closer to God in their leisure time. When we think of vacation, what comes first to our mind probably isn't sitting in the pew at church or discussing a passage in Bible study. Of course, this isn't to say that it's wrong of us to do other things on vacation, but we need constant reminders of the danger in setting our eyes on those things.

Sing or pray Psalter #164.

July 9- Read Numbers 30

As we have been going through this history in Bible class this year, I always try to stress to my students the importance of understanding the spiritual truth being taught by these Old Testament laws. All the things that they did back then are pictures of spiritual things for us today. In this chapter, we read about how a woman's vow could be cancelled out by her father or husband. So what is this supposed to teach us? Yes, we know that the man is head of the home, but is there something deeper here?

When we pray we do so *to* God the Father and *through* Christ. As is explained in Hebrews 4:14, 15, Christ is our high priest who sits at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. Our prayers are made perfect through him. We can see this truth pictured in Numbers 30. The woman, who pictures us,

must present her vow before her father or husband, who pictures Christ. The man must approve that vow, just as our sinful prayers need to be made acceptable to God. This picture, however, is always an imperfect one, as we see in verse 15.

Sing or pray Psalter #230.

July 10- Read Numbers 31

Moses commands the Israelites in verse 17 and 18 of this chapter to kill all the male Midianites, as well as all the women that had lain with a man, and keep only the young Midianite virgins alive to work as their slaves. The reason for killing all the older women is explained in verse 16, where it says, “these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor.” This judgment goes back to what happened in Numbers 25, where Balak has just failed to get Balaam to curse Israel. Instead of giving up, however, he comes up with this plan of sending the beautiful women of Moab and Midian into the camp of Israel to lead the men astray. This plan works amazingly well, and it begins tearing the nation of Israel apart until a plague kills 24,000 of them and Phinehas spears a man and woman who are flaunting their adultery in front of the whole congregation. It’s because of this that the grown women of Midian are all sentenced to death.

Sing or pray Psalter #362.

July 11- Read Numbers 32

Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh chose land for themselves on the east side of the Jordan River. The Bible doesn’t tell us that this was wrong, but their reason for doing so doesn’t appear to be very good. The beginning of this chapter tells us that these tribes wanted the land because they saw it was good pasture, and they had a lot of animals. God had already told them what land they were going to inherit, but they saw what they wanted and weren’t content to trust in God’s will. We are often like this. We all have things we want to accomplish in life, and sometimes we set our focus on these things without even thinking about what God’s will is for our lives. In addition, one minister pointed out on a blog I ran into that we never read about important figures in Israel coming from these tribes. From this, he believes that we can conclude that Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh

slowly faded out of Israelite history. Whether this is true or not, it reminds us of the importance of being active members in the church.

Sing or pray Psalter #370.

July 12- Read Numbers 33

Do you write things down so you won't forget? My wife and I sometimes joke about how I have the long-term memory in the relationship and she has the short-term. My mind tends to jump between thoughts very quickly, so it's not uncommon at all for me to completely forget what I was saying in the middle of a sentence. Because of this, it helps me a lot to write things down.

Numbers 33:2 says, "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD." Moses recorded Israel's history so that it wouldn't be lost and we could all learn from it. Matthew Henry suggests that we get into the habit of putting into writing all the ways in which God cares for us throughout life. We forget so quickly and have a tendency to focus on the negative things, that having these remembrances of God's caring mercies can help strengthen us in times of trial. These aren't the things we typically think of writing down first, but they could be the most important.

Sing or pray Psalter #213.

July 13- Read Numbers 34

There's a lot of talk about borders in our country right now. President Trump wants to build a wall on the US-Mexico border to help keep illegal immigrants out of our country, and he's receiving plenty of backlash from the media about it. The slogan, "Build bridges, not walls" is a very popular one. This slogan doesn't just apply to Trump's wall, but to society's major push for acceptance in all areas of life. We need to love and accept everyone, no matter how different from us they may be. Showing someone the error of their ways is now a hate crime that deserves punishment.

This chapter talks about the borders God set for the nation of Israel. These were very specific borders in which the Israelites were to live. Not only did the nation have very specific borders, it was

also very small, being about 160 miles long and 50 miles wide. This is how the church is today spiritually. We are part of a tiny remnant, and we must not go over our borders and commune with the world. As we often say, "We are in this world, but not of it."

Sing or pray Psalter #246.

July 14- Read Numbers 35

We know that God is not the author of sin, yet he uses our sin and that of wicked men for his purpose. An example of this is seen in the story of Levi. In Genesis 49:7, Levi is told that his descendants will be scattered throughout Israel as judgment for his part in the deceit and murder of the Shechemites. Yet, we can see how this curse was turned into a blessing in Numbers 35. Levi had the privilege of being cared for by the other tribes, and, in that way, they experienced the communion of the saints in a more special way than most Israelites did. The Tribe of Levi did not have their own land, but they were given specific cities from the other tribes in which they could live. They didn't grow their own crops, but were given from the tithe. We have similarities to this today with caring for our pastors and teachers. Of course, this wasn't only good for the Levites, but it was good for the rest of Israel as well. They had the privilege of caring for their fellow saints and being able to be taught by the Levites.

Sing or pray Psalter #369.

July 15- Read Numbers 36

I like history and the story of the daughters of Zelophahad is an interesting one. The story starts back in Numbers 27, when these daughters come to Moses with a problem. Their father has died and he has no sons to pass his land down to, so they are worried that their family's inheritance will be lost. God tells Moses that the daughters of Zelophahad were right in being concerned about this, and that their father's inheritance will be passed down to them. In addition, a system is laid down to ensure that someone in the family will always receive the inheritance.

This was a good solution to the problem, but we see that a new issue came up in Numbers 36. The daughters of Zelophahad were going to get married and were worried that their inheritance would become their husband's. In this way, it would still be lost from the family. In answer to this, God told

the heiresses that they must marry within their own family in order to keep their inheritance. This story illustrates for us the fact that these inheritances were a picture of our inheritance in heaven, something which we must never give up.

Sing or pray Psalter #30.

July 16- Read Deuteronomy 1

It struck me when I was reading this chapter that the pillar of fire and cloud that led Israel through the wilderness is a picture of Christ preparing a place for us in heaven. It was the beginning of verse 33 that made me think of this, which says, "Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in." This is what Christ does for us. In John 14:3 he says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Not only that, but God also shows us where to pitch our tent in this life. We are like lost sheep, but God takes us by the hand and leads us through the trials of this life into our heavenly home, as David confesses in Psalm 139:10. David goes on to say "even the night shall be light about me," which is exactly what happened when the Israelites were led by the pillar of fire.

Sing or pray Psalter #111.

July 17- Read Deuteronomy 2

The story of Sihon the Amorite is a good example of how God uses wicked men for his purpose. God told Israel to ask if they could pass through Sihon's land. They would do so quickly and quietly, and pay for whatever food and water they needed. However, Sihon refused and came out to fight Israel. In verse 30, God says that he "made his (Sihon's) heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand." This worked according to God's plan. First, it destroyed the wicked Amorites, who were ripe for judgment. Second, it added to the wealth of the Israelites, since they kept the spoil of the cities. Solomon brings out the idea that the wicked are actually the servants of the church in Ecclesiastes 3:26, where he states that the lot of the sinner is to "give to him that is good before God." Third, it showed God's power to the Israelites themselves and to the wicked nations around them. Just as God is glorified by the salvation of his church, so he is glorified by the destruction of his enemies.

Sing or pray Psalter #156.

July 18- Read Deuteronomy 3

Moses knew that God said he couldn't enter the promised land because of his sin of striking the rock, but he still tries asking toward the end of this chapter. In recounting God's answer to Israel, Moses says in verse 26, "But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes." I couldn't figure out what "for our sakes" meant here when I read the verse, but Matthew Henry has come up with a few good possible explanations. First, maybe the phrase is meant to convey the idea that Moses was provoked into striking the rock by the people of Israel, which was definitely true. Second, it could be pointing to the fact that losing their leader right at the moment they were preparing to enter Canaan was just as much a judgment on the nation of Israel as it was to Moses himself. Third, "for your sakes" could mean that God's anger towards Moses was a warning to the people against disobeying and questioning God. Although a type of Christ, Moses was still a man, and the Israelites needed to be reminded of that.

Sing or pray Psalter #290.

July 19- Read Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4:20 says, "But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day." Upon reading this verse, I connected the fiery furnace of Babylon, Egypt, and hell in a little different way than I had before. Both the fiery furnace and Egypt were pictures of hell. Just as the devil strives to bring us down into hell, the wicked sought to destroy God's people in the fiery furnace and in Egypt. However, in both cases God delivered his people from destruction. They were delivered from death. As it says in I Corinthians 15:55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We can't be brought down into hell, because Christ did that for us and atoned for our sin. The deliverances out of the fiery furnace and Egypt were pictures of that. Moses pictured Christ as Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and the angel of Jehovah himself saved Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace.

Sing or pray Psalter #87.

July 20- Read Deuteronomy 5

Israel actually heard God himself speaking to them out of the fire and lived! That's pretty amazing, as brought out by Moses in verse 33 of the previous chapter. The people of Israel realized this, as they make clear in Deuteronomy 5:26. They can't believe they're still alive after that interaction, and so they plead with Moses to talk with God for them. This shows that they saw a difference between themselves and Moses. They looked to him as their mediator, pointing to Christ. Although a type of Christ, however, Moses was a very imperfect one. John 1:18 exalts Christ above Moses when it says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Moses had a very special relationship with God, but even he could not see God's face. This is manifested in Exodus 33:22, where God covers Moses's face as he passes by.

Sing or pray Psalter #397.

July 21- Read Deuteronomy 6

When I read this chapter verses 11 and 12 really hit home for me. There is not a time in the history of the church to which this word would be more applicable than it is today. Verse 12 tells us to "beware lest thou forget the LORD." Oh, how easy it is to forget when we have the means to satisfy all our fleshly lusts and when there are countless opportunities to sin! The devil is lulling us to sleep, and we must stay vigilant. We are the watchmen who must not fall asleep at their posts. This warning is made clear in the parable of the ten virgins. We need to encourage each other to wake up, to watch and pray. In Nebuchadnezzar's image described in Daniel 2, there is only one world power after Rome, and that is the one we are in now. Throughout history, God has shown the warning signs of when an empire is ripe for judgment, and those signs are extremely evident in our country today. We live in the last empire. These are the last days. Beware!

Sing or pray Psalter #21.

July 22- Read Deuteronomy 7

The first verse of this chapter talks about seven nations that Israel was commanded to exterminate. These nations, which were said to be "greater and mightier" than Israel, included the

Canaanites, which I found confusing. We usually refer to all the people that Israel was to wipe out collectively as Canaanites, but this verse just lists them as one of the seven nations. It appears that the answer to this is that the term “Canaanite” can be used in a broader or narrower sense. All the seven nations listed did live in the land of Canaan and were, therefore, Canaanites. However, there was also a specific group of people living within Canaan that were known as Canaanites (Numbers 13:29). This group must have been stronger or larger than the others, which resulted in these other nations sometimes being referred to together by their name. This is similar to the way we use the term *Kleenex*. Kleenex is actually a brand name, but we often use it to refer to any kind of facial tissue. Similarly, the Canaanites were a specific tribe, but the name could refer to anyone living in the land of Canaan.

Sing or pray Psalter #3.

July 23- Read Deuteronomy 8

I could be reading a bit too much into the verse here, but the word *flint* stuck out to me in verse 15 of this chapter. Flint is used to make fire, so it’s interesting that the Bible states that it was out of this kind of a rock that the water came. Hebrews 12:29 says, “For our God is a consuming fire.” We have a just God who demands obedience. In John 4:14 we read, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The fire of God’s wrath had to be satisfied, so Christ, the water of life, put it out by dying on the cross and washing away our sins. We see this connection from another perspective in John 3:16, where John the Baptist tells the people that he baptizes them with water, but Christ baptizes us with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Also, the world was destroyed with water at the Flood, and it will be destroyed again with fire at the end of time.

Sing or pray Psalter #372.

July 24- Read Deuteronomy 9

The giants mentioned in this chapter have a very important place in Old Testament history. It was because of Israel’s fear of the giants that they ended up wandering in the wilderness for forty years. God told Israel to trust that he would give them the victory, but Israel faltered when the ten spies came

back saying that they felt like “grasshoppers” in comparison to the sons of Anak (Numbers 13:33). These giants are mentioned again in Deuteronomy 9. As Israel came to the Jordan River the second time, they again faced the challenge of defeating the children of the Anakim. Biblehub.com has some interesting information about these people, including the fact that their name likely meant “long-necked” and that the Israelite spies compared them to the giants that lived before the Flood, as mentioned in Genesis 6:4. Their main city was Hebron, which was given to Caleb after they were destroyed. The children of Anak were destroyed under Joshua’s leadership, but the giant Goliath and his family were likely descendants of these people who had joined the Philistine nation.

Sing or pray Psalter #420.

July 25- Read Deuteronomy 10

It’s been a good day. We’ve gotten through all the material I wanted and the kids have been well behaved, so I tell them to grab a piece of candy on the way out for recess. This gets them hooting and hollering and they run outside with their prizes. Only a couple think to thank me on the way out. This irks me. Haven’t they been taught to say thank you when someone gives them something?

If I stop and think about it for a minute, I can see that I’m acting a lot like David when he said that the rich man should be put to death for stealing from the poor man (2 Samuel 12). How hard is it to say thank you? Seems easy enough, yet I forget to do it every day. I need to be exhorted by Moses just as much as the Israelites did in this chapter, because God has done more for me than I can even fully comprehend, and yet I forget to thank him. We are all small children spiritually, but may we be small children who desire growth.

Sing or pray Psalter #403.

July 26- Read Deuteronomy 11

Deuteronomy 11:29 says, “And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.” This verse refers to an actual event that Joshua carried out when they entered Canaan, as recorded in Deuteronomy 27 and Joshua 8. Simeon, Levi, Judah, Isaachar, Joseph,

and Benjamin stood on mount Gerizim, while Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali stood on mount Ebal. The distance between the tops of these two mountains was about two miles, and Levites stood with the ark of the covenant in the valley between. When Joshua read the blessings of the law, the people on Mount Gerizim said “Amen”, and the people on Mount Ebal said “Amen” when Joshua read the curses. I found it interesting to look at which tribes were commanded to be on each mount. Although I don’t know if there is any special significance to this, it seems to me that the ones who stood on the mount of blessing were largely names I would have expected. Do you think there’s any significance?

Sing or pray Psalter #399.

July 27- Read Deuteronomy 12

I was confused with what it was saying about which flesh they could eat and where they could eat it in the second part of this chapter, but an examination of Matthew Henry’s commentary helped explain it all to me. God commanded the Israelites not to eat meat from their offerings in their houses, as they would eat normal meal. In addition, God makes here an allowance for those who did not live close to the tabernacle in Canaan. When they were in the wilderness, the Israelites had to kill every domesticated animal at the door of the tabernacle. However, many of them lived a great distance from the tabernacle in Canaan, so this was no longer required of them. Those animals which were unclean are also mentioned here. Although they were not to eat of the meat used for sacrifices, they could eat of that same animal when it had been killed for a common meal. Finally, the blood of the animal had to be poured out on the ground and not eaten, showing that the animal belonged to God, the giver of life. Much of this section is even repeated twice in the chapter, emphasizing its importance.

Sing or pray Psalter #393.

July 28- Read Deuteronomy 13

We are such weak creatures, who often don’t fully comprehend the weight of our sins. We know how wrong this or that sin is, but we don’t *feel* how wrong it is. Idolatry is a great example, because we all struggle with that sin daily. Yes, we know that we shouldn’t be so attached to that sport,

hobby, or vehicle, but it's understandable, right? We just really enjoy it. What's so wrong about that? Yes, I know I shouldn't exalt myself above others, but I'm much more involved in the life of the church than he is. Yes, I know I shouldn't be so consumed with plans for the business, but at least I'm being a good steward, right? It's appalling how often we try to justify our sins by twisting them into something pious.

The ease with which we fall into this sin can dull our response to it. Deuteronomy 13 wakes us up to the seriousness of idolatry. Those who are guilty deserve instant death, which is exactly what they received in the Old Testament. That is the just punishment for sin. Do you feel that? Do I?

Sing or pray Psalter #123.

July 29- Read Deuteronomy 14

In the first verse, God's people are commanded not to cut themselves, "nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." The first part is fairly straight-forward. Israel was commanded not to cut themselves in mourning and worship, like the heathen did. This could also be looked at as a more general command to care for our bodies, because they belong to God, not us. These things we are familiar with, but what is meant by the baldness between the eyes? According to Matthew Henry, this might have been a command against excessive sorrow for the death of loved ones. We know that the Bible commands us to love God above all earthly things and people, but this is very hard to do. It seems almost wrong to say that I love God more than my wife, my children, or my parents. Yet God warns us against the danger of becoming too attached to the relationships we have in this life (Matthew 10:37). Beauty is found in the fact that when we love God above all else, we are brought closer to the people we love in this life as well.

Sing or pray Psalter #418.

July 30- Read Deuteronomy 15

One thing I really try to stress in my classroom is students thinking for themselves. Of course, this can be done in a rebellious and improper way, but critical thinking is vital for the spiritual growth of the Christian. We need to be able to answer the "whys" of what we believe. Because of this, I would

love to have a discussion with my students about this chapter. Deuteronomy 15 talks about the way in which the people were to treat their fellow Israelites. As this is laid out, a clear distinction is made between the way they were to act towards their brothers and people from other nations. Israel was commanded to help their brethren, but steer clear of those around them. In fact, they weren't even allowed to borrow money from other nations. In contrast to this, we have the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. Here, a man goes to great lengths to help someone he doesn't know anything about. So which is it? Do we help everyone or just those whom we know to be in the church? What do you think?

Sing or pray Psalter #398.

July 31- Read Deuteronomy 16

As mentioned in verse 16, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles stood out from the rest of the feasts. Here's a brief overview of each.

The feast of unleavened bread began the night after the Passover and lasted for a week. It celebrated Israel being delivered from the bondage of Egypt. During this week, the Israelites had to remove all leaven, which pictured sin, from their homes.

The feast of weeks got its name from the fact that it began fifty days, or seven weeks and a day, after the feast of firstfruits, which was during the feast of unleavened bread. This feast is also known as Pentecost, which means "fifty." In this feast, the Israelites showed thankfulness to God for the wheat harvest and allowed the poor to glean in their fields.

Whereas the other two feasts were celebrated in the spring and summer, the feast of tabernacles was celebrated in the fall. During this week-long feast, the Israelites lived in booths they built to commemorate the years of wandering in the wilderness. It was a joyous feast, where they remembered God's care for them.

Sing or pray Psalter #409.

August 1- Read Deuteronomy 17

The last section of Deuteronomy 17 talks about how the Israelite kings of the future were to conduct themselves. The beginning of verse 17 commands him not to “multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away.” Of course, I immediately thought of David and Solomon. These two righteous men were types of Christ, yet they transgressed this law greatly, Solomon going so far as to have 1000 wives and concubines. We see the effect this had on him as well in 1 Kings 11:4, which says, “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods.”

We don't marry multiple wives today, but we often commit a similar sin when we engage in the entertainment of the world. The television and music of today systematically seeks to destroy God's commands about marriage and the life of the family. Music is a powerful thing, and the world's music often gets stuck in our minds without us thinking about what we are really saying. This is one of the major ways in which the world strives to lull us to sleep spiritually, and we must be on guard against it.

Sing or pray Psalter #385.

August 2- Read Deuteronomy 18

The “Prophet” mentioned in verse 15 and preceding verses is Christ. We can gather this from the context, as well as the fact that it's capitalized. According to Matthew Henry, “this is the clearest promise of him in all the law of Moses.” Henry also says that those who helped pick up the leftovers after the feeding of the five thousand were referring to this promise when they said in John 6:14b, “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.” It was given to Moses not only to prophecy of the coming Christ, but also to strengthen him on the Mount of Transfiguration in Mathew 17:3. Moses and Elijah could do this because Christ has a human nature in which he experiences all the trials we experience. Deuteronomy 18:15 says Christ came “from the midst of thee, of thy brethren.” The chapter ends by telling us how to distinguish this Prophet from false prophets. False prophets prophecy things that don't actually come to pass, but everything that Christ prophecies happens exactly as he said. Can you think of all the ways that we see this truth manifested in the world around us?

Sing or pray Psalter #287.

August 3- Read Deuteronomy 19

In the last verse here, God explains how sin must be punished. It reads, “And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” This clearly states that a murderer should be put to death, a command that is completely rejected today. Only a little over half the states still have the death penalty, and our prisons have long lines of people on death row who still haven’t been killed for a murder they committed decades ago. According to deathpenaltyinfo.org, ten people have been executed in the US so far this year, and half of them committed their crimes twenty or more years ago. The shortest length of time on the list was eight years. Proper discipline and punishment must take place very soon after the sinful act is committed in order to be effective. It’s so bad that many of those on death row will never actually be put to death. Wikipedia states that there are a whopping, 3,125 people on death row in the US today. The death penalty is not about getting revenge, but about paying the price for sin that God demands.

Sing or pray Psalter #300.

August 4- Read Deuteronomy 20

Facebook has a big problem on their hands. People keep using their livestream feature to record violent acts and even suicide. It seems as if a new one of these shocking and horrific cases pops up every week. People decide to livestream their own suicide for the world to watch. And do you know what? The world does, by the thousands.

God commands the Israelites in Deuteronomy 20 to be ready to die when they went into battle. We do not know when God is going to take us home, but we must be ready for it. We are ready to die, because we know that our true home is in heaven and that God’s will is perfect. We know that all things are for our good. Those who commit suicide on Facebook Live are ready to die as well, but for the opposite reason. Whereas we are ready to die because of the hope that is within us, they are ready to die because they have no hope. There is no hope without God.

Sing or pray Psalter #203.

August 5- Read Deuteronomy 21

There are a number of very interesting laws in this chapter, but the one I want to focus on today is about the judgment that came upon the rebellious son. If a son was unrepentant in his sin of stubbornness, rebellion, gluttony, and drunkenness, then his parents took him to the elders and stoned him to death. Can you imagine doing that? I don't know how an Israelite parent ever had the strength to carry this out, but it reminded them of sin's seriousness, and the fact that church unity must always come before family unity. When we examine the sins listed, we see that our young people still struggle with these things today, including the sin of drunkenness. Sometimes parents can trick themselves into thinking they are showing love towards their children by looking the other way. However, as parents (and teachers), we must show love by being vigilant in watching for these things. Just like it is for a parent, it's easy for a teacher to look the other way because it's the easy route and keeps us popular, but we must not fall into that trap the devil has laid.

Sing or pray Psalter #140.

August 6- Read Deuteronomy 22

Verse 5 seems kind of random. In the middle of this section about caring for others, we have this verse about separation between the sexes. It does, however, connect with verses 9-12, which prohibits the mixing of dissimilar things. The meaning of the verse is clear. A woman should not try to look like a man, and a man should not try to look like a woman. It wasn't very long ago that we probably could have read this obvious truth and moved on, but not so today. This is one of the areas that the devil is really focusing his attack on the church. According to Wikipedia, gender identity is "one's personal experience of one's own gender. Gender identity can correlate with assigned sex at birth, or can differ from it completely." This is exactly like the story of the emperor's new clothes. Everyone knows that Bruce Jenner is really a man, and yet they call him Caitlyn. Sometimes we make jokes about how ridiculous this is, but it's also a sign of the times. Man is openly rejecting the basic truths of creation. They are debating the undebatable, and there's no reasoning with this kind of thinking.

Sing or pray Psalter #110.

August 7- Read Deuteronomy 23

I remember when I first started getting collection envelopes from the deacons. I paid the single member amount for the General Fund and put a few bucks in for the other collections, without thinking about it nearly as much as I should have. When we got engaged our pastor talked to us about giving in marriage counseling, and so we sat down and looked at our finances. It was a wake-up call, because we quickly realized that we were not giving nearly enough. The Christian life is one of living out the truth that all things belong to God and of caring for one another. The last few verses of Deuteronomy 23 talk about caring for others and being cared for. Neighbors could eat crops as they passed by a farmer's field. This is similar to the gleaning which is talked about in the Book of Ruth. The Israelites were commanded to take care of those in need. The flipside of that was they were also commanded to allow themselves to be cared for. Our pride so easily gets in the way, but it's important that we give to our fellow saints and humbly receive gifts from them in return.

Sing or pray Psalter #315.

Originally Published in:

Vol 76 No 7 July 2017