

# Watching Daily At My Gates

## **February 9 Read Deuteronomy 14**

The first part of verse 1 and all of verse two set the theme for the chapter. We are God's children. He has chosen us and set us apart from all the nations of the world. How do we live as God's children? In Israel's day, it was very evident that Israel was different. Is it evident to the world around us that we are different? We should be different not only in the worship of our God, but we must also be different in our lifestyle. Are we? Why are we different? The last verse gives the answer. May this be our desire as we sojourn in the land of our pilgrimage here on earth. Sing Psalter 30.

## **February 10 Read Deuteronomy 15**

Among the many ceremonial and civil laws was an injunction that Israel do no harm to the poor. It was possible that in interpreting and carrying out the law of God that the poor be mistreated or ignored. This was possible in man's interpretation, not in God's. God commanded that the poor be cared for. Christ continued that command in the New Testament. Paul repeated that command in several of his epistles. How do we care for the poor around us? Is our care for them God-glorifying? Sing Psalter 13.

## **February 11 Read Deuteronomy 16**

In this repeating of God's laws to Israel come the commands of observing the three main feasts. The people are reminded as they keep these feasts that they are to be cheerful givers to God. Then they are told to establish judges in the land that God would give to them. These judges were to carry out justice in a Godly manner. Finally Israel was warned to stay away from all the heathen practices in the world around them. We need these reminders as well. When we remember them God will be glorified. We can only expect his blessing in the way of faithful obedience to all of his commands. Sing Psalter 65.

## **February 12 Read Deuteronomy 17**

Two injunctions are given by God for his people to follow in this chapter. First of all, God's church is to worship him in the manner in which he has commanded. In the Old Testament the church had to follow all the ceremonial laws which God had given to them on Mt. Sinai. In the New Testament age in which we live we are to worship him in "spirit and in truth." All of our worship must follow the regulative principle found in Scripture. Secondly, God knows that Israel will ask for a king. He gives principles

by which that king must rule. We, too, must choose leaders who will lead us in the way of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 137.

### **February 13 Read Deuteronomy 18**

Throughout the Old Testament there are sprinklings given of Christ and his great work. Here in this chapter we see that Christ will occupy the office of the prophet. As prophet he will speak a word. In fact, according to John 1, he is the Word. That Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Israel had to look for that Prophet. We know that that Prophet has come; now we must heed the Word that he has given to us and look for him to come again. Are we reading the Word? Are we watching in prayer for Christ's return? Sing Psalter 327.

### **February 14 Read Deuteronomy 19**

As Israel entered the Promised Land, various injunctions were given to them to promote brotherly love. First of all, cities of refuge were set up to provide a "cooling off" period in instances of accidental killings. Secondly, a law was given concerning the removing of the landmarks. Those markers set the boundaries between neighbors' lands. To remove them would be to take away from the neighbor that which God had given to them. Finally, there were various ordinances given that described the use of witnesses in daily life. Do we live in brotherly love with our neighbors? Do we obey the laws that God has given to us whether in his Word or through the authorities he has set up over us? Let us seek true brotherly love with our neighbors, and in it seek love with God. Sing Psalter 336.

### **February 15 Read Deuteronomy 20**

Israel was to be a fighting nation when it entered the land of Canaan. In this chapter many interesting laws were given concerning going into combat and combat itself. We do well to read them and see what they have to say to us in our everyday lives. The church today is a fighting force as well. We belong to the church militant. God has given to us rules concerning this conflict as well. We must fight the battle of faith. We may not become one with the enemy. Let us heed his Word and fight this battle looking until the day we all become part of the church triumphant in heaven. Sing Psalter 36.

### **February 16 Read Deuteronomy 21**

In this chapter we have several curious laws concerning happenings in every day life. We may well wonder about the significance of them all. One in particular is very instructive; that is the law of the rebellious son. What does this law say to us? How

does the principal put forth in this law guide us in our child raising? But then there is that ordinance at the end of the chapter. Here we have an ordinance that points directly to Christ. Israel of old did not understand the full implications of such a law, but we should. Let us take heed to the death of Christ and what it means for us and our salvation. Sing Psalter 234.

### **February 17 Read Deuteronomy 22**

As in the last chapter we find various laws concerning the rights of our neighbors. Some are very practical in nature as in the beginning of the chapter. Others give laws that were to depict the separation Israel was to have from the other nations. The final ones deal with the purity that Israel was to have within itself, and the punishments to be dealt out to those who violated that purity. Each of these laws has practical implications for us today. While we know that Christ has fulfilled the ceremonial aspects of these laws, the practical implications still hold in many instances. Let us seek to be separate from the world and be pure in our lives. Sing Psalter 24.

### **February 18 Read Deuteronomy 23**

Here we find various laws that deal with purity of actions and of life. Israel was to be a holy nation. They had to show this holiness with a pure manner of life in many areas. In the last part of the chapter we see that they had to be pure as they dealt with a neighbor in vows as well as in use of his property. In the New Testament we are enjoined to be holy even as God is holy. Let us walk in a holy manner in all that we do. Sing Psalter 174.

### **February 19 Read Deuteronomy 24**

The first part of this chapter is the reference to which Christ pointed when he mentioned “the hardness of your hearts.” As the fifth verse in the chapter records, marriage is honorable and must be taken seriously. For a year a man was allowed to solidify his marriage that no need of divorce might enter into their lives. This is the positive keeping of the seventh commandment. As we live in marriage or seek marriage, let us know that it is really “until death do us part.” Let us treat our spouses in a way that exemplifies fully the marriage of Christ and his church. Sing Psalter 360.

### **February 20 Read Deuteronomy 25**

Once again we find several practical laws that governed Israel’s everyday life. We might wonder why God went to such lengths in prescribing such laws and injunctions. The answer, I believe, is that in all of Israel’s life they were to serve God. So when they had to apply God’s law to even the slightest detail of that life, they were

reminded that God was sovereign over their whole life. Do we acknowledge God's sovereignty over our whole life? Do we live in such a way that we know that he is king over all things in our lives? When we do, we will know how great our God is, and how great his care is for us. Sing Psalter 164.

### **February 21 Read Deuteronomy 26**

Do we give to God in thankfulness for the good things he has given for us? Israel of old had many laws that directed them in their giving. The principle is still the same today. We give to the various kingdom causes in thankfulness to God for giving to us the kingdom. It is his and all that is in it is his. Let us be cheerful givers each and every Sunday as we know that God loves the cheerful giver. Sing Psalter 171.

### **February 22 Read Deuteronomy 27**

As Moses prepares to say his last words to the people of Israel, he gives instructions to set up a table of the law as well as an altar. The people are to array themselves on two mountains and as the Levites speak the words of the law, they are to respond to them with resounding Amen's. Imagine if you can the scene that day. Imagine the hearts of the true Israelites as they heard the words of God's law read to them and their responses. We must do more. We must keep those laws so that the words of the final curse do not come upon us. Christ has fulfilled the law, and we keep it out of gratitude for his sacrifice. Sing Psalter 41.

### **February 23 Read Deuteronomy 28**

This chapter, which continues the thoughts of the previous one, can be broken up into three parts: verses 1-14 contain blessings for those who keep the law, verses 15-44 contain curses for those who break God's law, and verses 45-68 give the prophecy of ruin for the disobedient. There are some chilling words in this chapter. All of them came true in Israel's later history. We, too, must strive to heed God's law so that his blessings rest upon us and our children as we wait for Christ's final coming on the clouds of glory. Sing Psalter 40.

### **February 24 Read Deuteronomy 29**

Now Moses makes the reading of these laws more personal to those standing around him. He mentions them by name as he tells them about the covenant that God will establish with them. God tells those men that the sin that would cause the curses of his law to be enacted upon them would be the sin of idolatry. God is a jealous God as we know from the second commandment. When his people follow after other gods, he brings upon them the effects of the curses written in the law. Do we try to follow other

gods? Most of us will not become image worshippers, but do we put our trust in anyone or anything else besides the sovereign God? If we do, beware the punishments for such sins. Sing Psalter 38.

### **February 25 Read Deuteronomy 30**

First of all, we see in this chapter a manifestation of God's wonderful grace. Even when his people are taken into captivity because of their sin, he will bring them back to the Promised Land. In verse 6 we see that he will work in the hearts of his people to turn them to him. God's grace is near to us as well. Christ has come and has given himself for us. The work of regeneration and calling has been accomplished through faith alone. All of the other blessings of salvation have been applied to us through Christ. We will be preserved until our final glorification with those saints who make up the cloud of witnesses in heaven. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. Sing Psalter 125.

### **February 26 Read Deuteronomy 31**

This chapter marks the beginning of the last charge which Moses gave unto Israel and its leaders, Joshua and the priests and Levites. In this charge he urges them to have courage. They had a task ahead of them which might seem impossible by man's standards, but as we know, all things are possible with God. He reminds them to keep the law. They are to read that law at set times in their history so that they do not forget it. Finally, he once more implores them not to fall into idolatry as its consequences were great. We, too, should heed the admonitions of Moses as we walk in this life looking for our entry into the New Canaan. Sing Psalter 35.

### **February 27 Read Deuteronomy 32**

Here we have Moses's farewell remarks which are given to Israel in the form of a song. Faithful renditions of Scripture and its truths are good for God's people. They give to them a means of remembering all the goodness God has shown to them throughout history. They also are a way to remember the truths of Scripture that we may grow in them and teach them to our children. In this song God and all his goodness to his people are recounted for Israel. It ends with the promise that God in his mercy will save his chosen even when they plunge themselves into sin. Let us sing the songs of Zion, and let us learn from them about our faithful God and his goodness towards us. Sing Psalter 251.

### **February 28 Read Deuteronomy 33**

Before Moses ascended Mount Nebo, he spoke blessings to each of Israel's tribes. First Moses pronounces a blessing upon Israel as a whole and then upon each tribe individually. These blessings are God's blessing upon his beloved or upon Jeshurun-the beloved one. Several commentators explain this name as God's pet name for his people much as a father has a pet name for one or more of his children. The chapter ends with a reminder of what God is to his people. It also shows how God's favor upon them will lead to eternal happiness. May we read these instructive words and take them into our hearts. Sing Psalter 237.

### **February 29 Read Deuteronomy 34**

Before God took Moses to heaven in death, he shows to him, by a miracle, all of the Promised Land. Moses was given a glimpse of the land for which he had struggled to lead the people over the past forty years. Moses was only a type of Christ just as Canaan was only a type of heaven. The day will come in which all of God's people will be led over the final Jordan into the New Canaan where the New Jerusalem will be found. We have many Moseses to lead us. May we see God's goodness to us in giving to us faithful shepherds to lead and protect us through this valley of the shadow of death. May we look forward to living in his house forever. Sing Psalter 28.

### **March 1 Read Joshua 1**

Moses was dead, and Israel had mourned for him for thirty days. Now God commands Joshua to take up the work for which he was ordained. This work was the typical leading of God's people into the New Canaan. Joshua is the Hebrew equivalent to Jesus-Jehovah Salvation. Just as Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, so Jesus leads us into the Promised Land of heaven. Joshua had to be a military leader just as Christ must lead us in the fight of faith on this earth. We must be ready to fight even as Joshua admonished all of Israel to be ready to fight God's battles. Sing Psalter 20.

### **March 2 Read Joshua 2**

Just as Joshua used accepted means of warfare to take the land of Canaan for God's people, so we must have at our disposal means of war to fight the battle of faith. We can find the weapons, armor, and methods in his Word. We, like the New Testament church to which Paul wrote, must be commanded to put on the armor and use the weapons. We learn the manner of warfare as we attend church each Sabbath Day. Our children learn war as they attend catechism, listen to the Bible stories at home and at school, and learn from their parents. May we be ready to fight so that we can demolish whatever Jericho is placed in our way. Sing Psalter 322.

### **March 3 Read Joshua 3**

Just as Joshua told Israel the way in which they would enter Canaan, so has our leader told to us the way we will enter heaven. The ways are similar. They are by faith. As Israel stood by the seemingly impassable Jordan, so we stand by our seemingly impassible Jordan-death. But we have a way. That way is Christ as he told us in John 14:6. He is the way to the Father whose throne is in heaven. May we be instructed by the Old Testament accounts as we make our way to our eternal-resting place. Sing Psalter 289.

#### **March 4 Read Joshua 4**

In the old dispensation Israel was given many pictures to remind them of God's work on their behalf. Here we have the account of stone memorials which were set up to remind Israel and to serve as a springboard for instruction for its children in the years to come. We have memorials as well. We have our sacraments to remind us of the work wrought on our behalf by Christ. We remember his work as we partake in them. We also should use them to teach the covenant seed about that work. Let us not just view these accounts as history; let us use them to help us appreciate the work of salvation Christ has accomplished on our behalf. Sing Psalter 276.

#### **March 5 Read Joshua 5**

After crossing the Jordan River Israel camped for several days in what would become their home base, Gilgal. This was not an idle time, however. First of all, Joshua had to perform that separation ceremony, circumcision upon all those who had not been circumcised in the wilderness. Secondly, they celebrated the first Passover in Canaan. Thirdly, he had to prepare them for the cessation of manna. God would now feed them from the fruits of their new home. At the end of the chapter the captain of God's host, the Old Testament manifestation of Christ, appeared to Joshua to encourage him in the arduous work which he had to carry out. May we follow that captain as we fight the battles of faith placed before us. Sing Psalter 273.

#### **March 6 Read Joshua 6**

Here we find the familiar story of the fall of Jericho. The children's song and spiritual "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho" has it all wrong. This was God's battle and his victory. The manner that Israel conducted the battle leaves no doubt of that fact. This was plainly a miracle wrought by God no matter what unbelievers may say. Not only was Israel given an important victory, but the way of salvation was continued as we find a great, great, ... grandmother of Christ saved in the win. Rahab was rewarded through the faith wrought in her by almighty God. This reward was not for her alone but for all God's elect. Sing Psalter 266.

### **March 7 Read Joshua 7**

Israel had to learn that the way to victory was to be found in the way of obedience. This is a theme found throughout the Old Testament. It is a lesson that we, of the new dispensation, must learn as well. Achan disobeyed God and took of God's spoils. The treasures of Jericho were to be devoted to God and used in his service alone. For his sin not only was Achan killed, but also his whole family as the way of corporate responsibility was shown to Israel and to all of God's church. We must learn this lesson as it is God's way for his people. Sing Psalter 101.

### **March 8 Read Joshua 8**

Now that the sin of Achan had been removed from their midst, God gave to Israel a complete victory over Ai. Now Israel may claim the spoils of war and use them in their lives. After the victory Joshua led the people of God to Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. On those mountains Israel set themselves to listen and to respond to the law of God as they kept the commandment of Moses given before his death. Israel would only win other victories by the way of obedience. Let us allow their obedience to be a model for us as we live in this world. Sing Psalter 334.

### **March 9 Read Joshua 9**

The armies of evil led by their general Satan do not give up. They try all sorts of ploys to defeat the church. Sometimes they gather together into a great host to fight against God's people in an open matter. Other times, like the inhabitants of Gibeon, they resort to craft and guile to try and defeat God's people. Israel forgot an important principle when they dealt with Gibeon. They forgot to ask God for instruction on what they must do. When we depend on our own skill and intelligence we, too, will fall. Let us seek God's guidance in all things in this life and in that way defeat the wiles of the devil. Sing Psalter 165.

### **March 10 Read Joshua 10**

We have a king who will lead us in the battle of faith against Satan and his hosts. This king will lead us not only in the battle but will also lead us to victory. The Lamb will reign victorious in heaven and through him we will gain our rightful place in God's kingdom, which is not of this earth. While we may not experience miracles the way Israel did on the battle field that day, we have gained the victory through the greatest miracle of them all. That miracle is the incarnation of God's Son who came to this earth and crushed the head of Satan by dying on the cross. May we see these miracles for what they are and not dismiss them as idle tales as the unbelievers do. Sing Psalter 158.

