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Proper 12 • Deuteronomy 7:6-9 • July 27, 2014

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According to the context of this pericope, Israel was to have no fellowship or covenant with the heathen. She was to war against their blasphemous religion. In a similar way, Christians of the New Testament are to distance themselves from the world and its wicked, unbelieving ways (1 Cor 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14–18). In both cases, this spirit of separation and noncommunion should proceed not from pride and lovelessness, but from knowledge of God's love and faithfulness.

God's Faithfulness and Ours

- I. God, our faithful God, keeps his word and covenant in redemption and forgiveness.
 - A. This is seen in his dealings with his people Israel. He chose them for a holy historical destiny of testimony to him. The reason for this choosing was not a greatness in Israel, nor was it any claim to righteousness on Israel's part (Dt 9:4–5), but the cause was his love. The result was that he redeemed them (v. 8). Redeem (padah) connotes an image of purchasing freedom (e.g., Ex 13:13–14) with a ransom (pidyon, Ex 21:30). It is used to describe God's freeing of Israel and the individual believers in Israel—from Egypt, from the Babylonian captivity (Is 35:10), from iniquities (Ps 130:8), from death, its curse and darkness (Hos 13:14; Ps 49:7ff.), from the troubles of life (Ps 25:22; 26:11; 31:5). Through his covenant with the Israelites, he showed mercy and forgiveness to those who clung to him.
 - B. He is faithful also to us, who are redeemed through Christ from the curse of sin, the devil's kingdom, and death (1 Pt 1:18–21; Col 1:13–14; Rom 8:23). The cause is not in us, but in His love, with Christ's blood as the ransom. Some Christians have been redeemed from literal demon possession by his grace (e.g., Roberta Blankenship, *Escape from Witchcraft*); all trust in him that the wicked foe may have no power over them.
- II. God's faithfulness is guaranteed in his oath concerning his people.
 - A. He swore to Abraham to bless his seed and to bring blessing to the nations through his seed (v. 8). The oath is found in Genesis 22:16–18. This is the basis of his choosing of Israel.
 - B. That oath includes blessing for us. It was kept, and still is kept, ultimately in Christ's work and applies to all the believing children and heirs of Abraham, including Gentiles with faith (Heb 6:13–19; Gal 3:7ff.). Thus Jews and Gentiles who trust in Christ are the new Israel and may trust that the Lord is faithful never to leave nor forsake them.

- III. Israel is a holy nation, belonging to God, redeemed for a purpose.
- A. Old Testament Israel is consecrated to be his holy people, remembering his redemption (v. 6). Its holy purpose is priestly work (Ex 19:6), teaching his truth to the nations (Dt 4:5–8; Is 2:3), proclaiming his great faithfulness (Ps. 89). The apostles and other Jewish believers in Christ fulfilled this purpose. Paul sorrowed without ceasing that so many of his kinsmen did not (Rom 9:1ff.).
 - B. All Christians are called to the holy purpose of faithfully serving and testifying to the Lord who has redeemed them. We are the new Israel, a holy “nation” to tell of his wonderful deeds to a world that still needs his marvelous light. But we cannot do it if we fall back into the darkness ourselves (1 Pt 2:9–12). Iuva, Iesul (Help, Jesus!)