

LAWS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL CONFESSION AND OBEDIENCE DEUTERONOMY 26:01–19

Introduction

What a person confesses is important — of critical importance. A sincere confession determines how a person lives upon this earth and how a person walks and behaves day by day. For example, if a person truly believes in the pleasures and material possessions of this world, then he attaches himself to pleasures and possessions. He confesses his belief in worldliness by his behaviour and by the words he speaks. If a person believes in humanism, that man is the ultimate authority and power in the universe, then he attaches himself to the humanistic philosophy. By his behaviour and words he confesses humanism. If a person believes that science and technology are the keys to success and achievement, then he attaches himself to technology and science. By his behaviour and words, he confesses that his hope lies in technology and science.

Again, what a person confesses is of critical importance, for it determines how a person lives. But even more than this, what a person confesses determines his eternal destiny. Just think about the fact: a person's fate — whether or not he lives eternally in the promised land of heaven — is determined by what he confesses. Because of this, a wise and honest person will study his confession. He will make sure that what he confesses is reality, that it is the truth.

What a person confesses matters to God. For this reason, God established two special services of confession for the Israelites. Two times a year they were to approach God with hearts filled with gratitude, making a strong confession of faith in Him. This is the subject of the present passage, a strong lesson on the importance of a true confession: *Laws That Require Special Confession and Obedience*, Deuteronomy 26:1-19.

- I. The confession to be made during the offering of the first-fruit:
thanking God for His salvation and blessings (vv. 1-11).
- II. The confession to be made when offering the three-year tithe:
being faithful in giving (vv. 12-15).
- III. The strong charge to obey God (vv. 16-19).

I. *Deuteronomy 26:01–11 Confession of Salvation During the Offering of the First-fruit*

There was the confession to be made during the offering of the first-fruit. This confession declared the great salvation of God and the wonderful blessings of God. God's people were always to show gratitude for God's salvation and blessings, but there were two specific times during the year when a very special confession was to be made. One of these times was the service where the first-fruit offering was presented to God. Note the ceremony of the service:

1. The Festival of First-fruits was to be celebrated after the Israelites had entered and taken possession of the promised land (vv. 1-2). The very first celebration was to take place right after the first harvest. A person was to take some of the very first produce from the harvest, put it in a basket, and take it as an offering to the worship centre. Note that the worship centre is said to be the place that God has chosen to place His Name, the place where His Name is honoured. This was the sanctuary where the Ark of the covenant was placed, the Ark that symbolized God's very own presence.
2. The confession was a strong declaration.
 - a. The person declared that he had now entered the promised land, the very land that the Lord Himself had sworn to give His people (v. 3). The person was confessing that he trusted God and rested in God. His trust and rest were demonstrated by the very fact that he was standing there in the promised land: he was there because he had trusted and was resting in the presence and power of God.
 - b. The person was to have the priest take the basket and present the offerings of first-fruit to the Lord (v. 4).
 - c. The worshipper was then to declare the great salvation of God before the priest and all others standing around (vv. 5-9). Note the strong confession declared by the worshipper:
 - => He confessed that Israel had been born of just one man, Jacob (v. 5). The implication is that God alone could cause a nation to be born of one person.
 - => He confessed that Israel had become a great nation, a mighty and numerous people (v. 5).
 - => He confessed that Israel had been enslaved by the Egyptians and been mistreated, afflicted and forced into hard, exhausting labour (v. 6).
 - => He confessed that the Israelites had cried out for God to deliver them in the midst of their misery, toil and oppression (v. 7).
 - => He confessed that God had heard the cry of His people and delivered them with great power and miraculous signs and wonders (v. 8).
 - => He confessed that God had led His people and given them the promised land, the most fruitful land imaginable — a land that actually flowed with milk and honey (v. 9).
 - d. The worshipper was then to declare his thanksgiving to God. This he did by bowing down and presenting the first-fruit offering to God (v. 10).
3. Note why the first-fruit offering was established as a law: to have a worship service where everyone could rejoice together and give thanks to God for his new life in the promised land. Every citizen, Levite and foreigner among the Israelites was to celebrate the Festival of First-fruits. The people of God were...
 - to celebrate the new life given by God
 - to celebrate the rest, both physical and spiritual rest, that God had given them in the promised land

- to celebrate the gift of the promised land itself

The celebration of the first-fruit was to be a strong confession of God's great salvation and wonderful blessings that He poured out upon His people.

Thought 1. We are to offer thanksgiving to God for His wonderful salvation and for His continued blessings. Everything we have is due to God. We have been delivered from the sin, enslavement and death of this world — saved to live eternally with God in the promised land of heaven. But not only this: the strength and skill to work and all the good things we possess — they have all come from the hand of God. God has poured out His blessings upon us.

There is only one confession that can flow from our lips, the confession of thanksgiving to God for His glorious salvation and wonderful blessings. This is the great lesson of the first-fruit offering.

Eph 5:20 *Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

Col 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

Col 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1 Th 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Tim 4:4 *For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.*

Heb 13:15 *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Deu 8:10 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*

1 Chr 16:8 *Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

Psa 9:11 *Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

Psa 50:14 *Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High.*

Psa 92:1 *It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High.*

Psa 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psa 107:22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.

II. Deuteronomy 26:12–15 Confession when Offering the Three-Year Tithe

There was the confession to be made when offering the three-year tithe. A person was to make a strong declaration of faithfulness, that he was faithful in giving a true tithe. Note the Scripture and outline.

1. The law governing the three-year tithe had already been given to the people (see note pt. 6, Deut 14:22-29). Simply stated, every third year a special tithe was to be given to support the Levites or local ministers, the foreigners, the orphans and the widows (v. 12).
2. As a person was presenting his offering to the Lord through the priest, he was to make a strong confession of faithfulness.
 - a. He was to confess that he had been faithful in the tithe, in supporting the ministers and needy throughout the land (v. 13). He was to declare that he had kept the commandment of God to tithe and that he had not turned aside from any of God's commandments.
 - b. The worshipper was also to declare that he had not misused any of the tithe (v. 14). Note the detail of the confession. He was to declare:
 - => that he had not used any of the tithe for himself.
 - => that he had not used any of the tithe while he was in mourning. During periods of mourning, there were days that he was not allowed to work; consequently, the need for some of the tithe could have arisen.
 - => that he had not used any of the tithe while he was unclean; that is, spiritually, ceremonially unclean. Again, he would not have been working during this period, and a need for the tithe could have arisen.
 - => that he had not used any of the tithe for the dead, perhaps referring to funeral expenses.
 - c. After making his confession, the worshipper was to seek the LORD in prayer (v. 15). He was to ask the LORD to look down from heaven and to bless all His people and the fruitfulness of the land.

Thought 1. The believer must tithe. We must all support the ministers of God, the foreigners, orphans, widows and the needy of this world. We must meet the needs of people and carry the glorious message of the gospel to the world. All this takes money, a tithe of our income. Without money — without a tithe — the needs of people will not be met and the gospel will not be taken to the ends of the world. Our money is needed. It was needed during the days of God's aged servant Moses,

and it is needed today. This is the reason God requires us to be generous, benevolent — to possess a giving heart.

Luke 6:38 *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Luke 21:1-4 *As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”*

Acts 4:34-35 *That there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.*

Acts 20:35 *In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’*

1 Cor 16:2 *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made*

2 Cor 9:6 *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

Lev 27:30 *A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.*

Prov 3:9 *Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops.*

Mal 3:10 *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”*

III. Deuteronomy 26:16–19 The Strong Charge to Obey God

There was the strong charge to obey God. Remember that Moses had been preaching a series of messages on the commandments and laws of God, a series of sermons that have covered the major portion of the great book of Deuteronomy (Deut 4:44-26:19). Did Moses preach the series of sermons just to the leadership who in turn conveyed his messages to the three million plus Israelites? Or, did he personally preach to all of the Israelites himself, tribe by tribe, splitting them up into manageable groups? The answer is not known. Whatever the case, Moses now comes to the conclusion of his series of messages on the commandments and laws. The reader can just picture Moses standing before a mass of people and preaching from the depths of his heart. He is soon to go home to be with the

Lord; thus every word he speaks is of critical importance. This he knows, and his heart reaches out to the people, wanting them to hang upon every word being preached. This is especially true with the present charge he is about to give. Above all other exhortations, this one charge must be heeded: the people must — absolutely must — obey God.

1. The charge was forceful: the people must obey all the commandments and laws of God. Moses cried out without reservation, you must obey the laws of God with all your heart and with all your soul (v 16)
2. Note the reasons why obedience is necessary.
 - a. You must obey because of your confession, your declaration of faith (v. 17). You have declared that the Lord is your God, that you will obey Him. You have declared that you will keep his commandments and laws.
 - b. Because of your declaration and confession, God has established His covenant with you. God has declared this day that you are His people. His treasured possession His very special treasure. Moreover, He has declared that you are to do just as you have promised: obey Him (v. 18).
 - c. If you are true to your word — if you keep God’s commandments — then the most wonderful promise and guarantee is given you (v. 19). God will exalt you above all the peoples of the earth and make you a great nation. You will be exalted in praise, name and honour. Moreover, you will become God’s holy people: a people totally set apart to God

Thought 1: There are two strong lessons in this point for us:

- (1) We must obey God without reservation, we must obey Him with all our heart and soul.

Mat 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

John 14:21 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

John 14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

John 15:10 “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”

John 15:14 “You are my friends, if you do what I command.”

Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!”

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

Rev 22:14 *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”*

Deut 6:17 *Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you.*

Deu 26:16 *The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Josh 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

(2) If we obey God — follow Him with our whole heart and soul — God promises to exalt us. We become His very special treasure, His treasured possession.

1 Pet 2:9-10 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Rom 8:18 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

2 Tim 2:10 *Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

Exo 19:5 *Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine.*

Psa 4:3 *Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.*

Psa 91:14 *“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.”*

Isa 58:14 *“Then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

Dan 12:3 *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. ■*