

Sunday – February 26, 2017

Preparation

This week we'll close out the Book of Numbers and dive into the Book of Deuteronomy. The Book of Numbers will close with a reflection of the journeys of Israel from Egypt leading us into the Book of Deuteronomy.

The Book of Deuteronomy is the fifth and final "Book of Moses". Moses, of course, is considered the author of this Book, however, we do find that Joshua had some additions himself (Joshua 24:26). This Book contains 34 chapters, 959 verses, and 28,352 words. The name "Deuteronomy" itself means "second law". This Book provides us with the second giving of the law. Deuteronomy concludes the life of Moses; the record of his death being found in Deuteronomy 34. God's testimony of Moses is found in Deuteronomy 34:10, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face". As with the death of any great leader, there is mourning for a season. However, just as God designed it, Moses already had his successor in the works in the man, Joshua. That being said, as God buries Moses, Joshua, who the Bible says "was full of the spirit of wisdom", steps into his shoes and the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 34:9 that "the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses."

To prepare us for this week, and furthermore, for the Book of Deuteronomy, check out this passage we come across this week: Deuteronomy 7:6-8 "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Of course this passage is dealing with the nation of Israel, but we all can agree that God has so much more in store for us, "the church, Which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22-23). Let's all prepare ourselves for this week and this Book through prayer and submission to all God has preserved for us through His blessed word. Amen and Amen.

TODAY’S READING: NUMBERS 33-36

OVERVIEW:

A summary of Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness; the dividing of the land of Canaan; the inheritance of the Levites; the cities of refuge; the laws concerning female inheritance within the patriarchal tribe.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In chapter 33, God provides us with a summary of Israel’s journeys from Egypt to the Jordan. Note God’s stern warning in 33:55 – *“But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.”* In the New Testament equivalent, God is picturing the fact that living in the fullness of victory, He has designed in Christ (i.e. Canaan), is dependent upon us overcoming *“every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us”* (Heb. 12:1). Any area of our flesh that we refuse to deal with will become pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides, and shall vex us in our walk with Christ.

In chapter 34, God caused the children of Israel to look ahead to the time when they would possess Canaan, as He assigned to each tribe the portion of their inheritance in the land. The Levites were also assigned their special cities; and most of all, the cities of refuge are defined in chapter 35. We will talk further about the cities of refuge as we move into the Book of Joshua, but do note some beautiful pictures of Christ, to Whom we *“have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us”* (Heb. 6:18).

Note some of the beautiful pictures of Christ seen in these cities:

1) THEY WERE APPOINTED BY GOD, NOT MOSES. Moses did not choose these cities, picturing the fact that the Law (Moses) cannot save anyone. Just as these cities were appointed by God, as an act of His grace, to be shelter or refuge from judgment, so Christ, as an act of God’s grace (John 3:16), was appointed by God to be our shelter of refuge from the judgment of sin (John 1:29).

2) THEY WERE ANNOUNCED BY GOD IN HIS WORD. The six cities are specifically named in Joshua 20:7-8, and could never be changed. There were

other cities that were larger and more prominent, but none of them could shelter the sinner. God has also specifically named Christ as the one and only shelter from sin, though many of the world's religions are larger or more prominent. God's Refuge, Christ will never change, based on the authority of His Word (John 4:6; Acts 4:12).

3) **THEY WERE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL MEN.** The six cities were arranged by God so that no tribe was very far away from the place of safety. They were all very accessible. We are told by the rabbis that there were signposts that pointed the way to the cities of refuge, and that the gates of these cities were never shut. God has made Christ accessible to all men, even children (Matt. 18:3). The Holy Spirit is given to point men to Christ (John 16:13-14), and all who come, will find His gates open wide (John 6:37)!

4) **THE GUILTY HAD TO APPROPRIATE GOD'S PROVISION TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT.** It wasn't enough to know that the cities of refuge existed, or even to believe that they could provide refuge from judgment. The guilty had to actually enter in to the city. So, it is not enough that a sinner believe that Christ, as God, existed, or even that they believe that He is God's Refuge from the judgment of sin; He must be "IN CHRIST" (II Cor. 5:17).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the **PROMISED LAND** – Num. 33:50-54 (Note that the Promised Land was filled with abundance and protection for those who took God at His Word) – John 10:10 – Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

In the **CITIES OF REFUGE** – Num. 35 (Heb. 6:18-20 – Christ is our Refuge from the judgment of God and the curse of the Law.)

In the **INHERITANCE** of the children of Israel – Num. 36:7 (Eph. 1:10-11)

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 1-4

OVERVIEW:

Moses' history lesson: From the Ten Commandments to the spies; the wilderness; the nations avoided; the nations conquered; Joshua charged to be the next leader; the people compelled to heed God's Word.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Nearly 41 years have passed since Moses led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. A journey of eleven days has taken over 38 years because of unbelief and disobedience. Now Moses speaks to a new generation preparing to enter a new land. The first three chapters are a history lesson: Remember what happened to your fathers!

Deuteronomy 1:6 begins the story. The Lord told Moses to leave Horeb (Mt. Sinai) and prepare to enter the land promised to their fathers. The commandments had been received; the Tabernacle had been built and the Lord was providing daily food. But during the eleven-day journey, the murmuring of the people causes Moses to say he cannot bear the people alone. Seventy wise and understanding men are chosen to be rulers. Judges of the people are to judge righteously with no respect of persons.

Soon, the children of Israel stand at the mountain of decision. The conflict is always the same: our will vs. God's Word. Verses 20 and 21 give the promise of the Lord of the Universe. However, verse 26 is the response. Deuteronomy 1:27 through 2:3 is the sad result. No one from 20 years old and up will enter into the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb. The last of chapter 1 reminds us that the land of blessing and rest could only come from the Lord. Human strength and will, cannot gain what is lost by disobedience.

Chapter 2 verses 4 through 23 continue the journey through the land of three nations that the Lord will not allow the children of Israel to fight. Though these are later enemies of Israel, the Lord has promised these lands to Lot and Esau (vs. 5, 9, 19). In verse 7, Moses reminds the new generation that the Lord was blessing them even in the wilderness. But now, in verse 16, the old generation is gone; it is time to move forward.

The battles begin. As the children of Israel travel upward on the east side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, two nations must be conquered. Sihon (warrior), the

king of Heshbon (strongholds) is the first battle. The Lord gives the victory to the children of Israel as He promised. Likewise, II Corinthians 10:3-5 reminds us that the Lord gives victory in our spiritual battles against strongholds of the enemy.

The history lesson ends with the division of the conquered land and the charge to Joshua. Joshua is to remember the deliverance of the Lord and not fear as he leads the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Moses is told again that he cannot enter the land. With this, we are reminded that the Law (Moses) can never bring us into the land of blessing and rest; only Jesus (Joshua) can (John 1:17).

Chapter 4, verse 1, gives the reason for chapters 1-3. Hear and do. If the new generation will hear and follow, the Lord will give them life and a place to live. Don't add to or take away from the Word of the Lord. Take heed and keep thy soul diligently. Teach your sons and grandsons.

The Lord reveals new insights of Himself in verses 14 through the end of the chapter. When the Ten Commandments were given, God did not reveal Himself visibly so no graven images could be made. We are to walk by faith not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7); *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Romans 10:17). Further warnings are given regarding worshipping any image, sun, moon or stars.

Compare verses 24 and 31. The Lord thy God is a consuming fire and a merciful God. God will bring judgment for evil, but is full of forgiveness.

And now the most miraculous revelation of all: God chose these people because of love. Verses 35 and 39 reveal that there is no other God beside the Lord, but right in the middle of these verses, God reveals that He loves people. Though God's love for his people has been demonstrated from the very beginning of the Bible, this is the first time that God's love is actually expressed to His children. In Deuteronomy, the love between God and His children is mentioned over 20 times. Moses closes his message to the new generation with the new message of God's love.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE – Deut. 1:17 (II Timothy 4:8) As DELIVERER – Deut. 1:30, 2:33, 3:3 (Romans 8:21; Galatians 1:4) As THE FAITHFUL ONE – Deut. 2:9, 12, 19 (I Corinthians 10:13; II Thessalonians 3:3; I John 1:9) As TEACHER – Deut. 4:14 (John 8:28) As THE ONE TRUE GOD – Deut. 4:35, 39 (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Colossians 2:9) As THE LOVER OF MEN – Deut. 4:37 (John 15:13; Titus 3:4, 5)

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 5-8

OVERVIEW:

Ten Commandments; Greatest Commandment; Instructions for New Homes; Instruction for New Land; Remember the Lord

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Moses starts his second sermon with a showstopper! God's covenant was not just to the fathers; it continues to the new generation (vs. 3). This isn't just history. God's Word, the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, the Epistles are not just for the original audience; God speaks to those who are *here alive this day*. He is pursuing us as we pursue Him!

Chapter 5 retells the Ten Commandments and how they were received in Exodus 20. The people say they will keep the commandments, and the Lord (vs. 29) emphasizes that fearing and keeping His commandments comes from the heart. Even in the Old Testament, outward appearance was not enough. The Lord Jesus Christ quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 as the greatest commandment. As previously mentioned, the love between God and His children is mentioned 20 times throughout Deuteronomy.

And now, just as God leads and teaches His children, Moses instructs the children of Israel to teach in their homes. Teaching in the homes goes hand in hand with public preaching and instruction. The Word of God is to be prominent in the home. Four distinct opportunities are to be used to teach children:

1. When you are sitting in your house. 2. When you are in the way (driving). 3. When you go to bed. 4. When you get up in the morning.

Still today, these can be the greatest times of instruction, meditation or prayer. Not surprisingly, these are the times, which that the world and its clamor, try to take from us. Seek to reclaim this time for the Lord and your children.

Moses completes this chapter with warnings to not forget the Lord when you are comfortable in your house. Keep the law diligently. Moses reminds them: "*He brought us out of Egypt so that He could bring us in to a new land.*"

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the land. The Lord promised in Exodus 3:17 that He would drive out nations and give the land to the children of Israel. Now they are

reminded of the promise, the power of the Lord over Egypt, and His provision on the journey. The Lord promises to continue to deliver the land and provide for them. God will deliver, they are to destroy. Do not make covenants with those nations. Do not marry their sons and daughters. Destroy their idols and images. II Corinthians 6:17 and 18 says: *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”*

Another little nugget to store away is in chapter 8 verse 2. God tells the nation of Israel that He took them through the wilderness to humble them and to prove them. The hard times exposed what was in their heart! Even the Lord Jesus Christ quotes from this passage during His time of testing. God provides for all of our needs and exposes our hearts in time of need. Don't ever lose sight of that!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE EVERLASTING COVENANT – Deut. 5:2 (Hebrews 13:20, 21, John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47) As MEDIATOR – Deut. 5:5 (I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6) As WELL- PLEASING – Deut. 6:18 (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Luke 3:22) As CALLED OUT OF EGYPT – Deut. 6:21 (Matthew 2:13-15)

As ONE WHO WILL SMITE THE NATIONS – Deut. 7:2 (Revelation 19:15) As REEDEMER – Deut. 7:8 (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12) As ONE WHO WILL REPAY FACE TO FACE – Deut. 7:10 (Revelation 1:7)

Thursday – March 2, 2017

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 9-12

OVERVIEW:

God's promises to the fathers; God's grace to the undeserving; Second tables of commandments; Love and obedience; Blessing and curse; Ordinances

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Once again, there are two main thoughts that permeate God's message in today's reading: REMEMBER and OBEY. The children of Israel are reminded that the Lord has chosen them and protected them, but not because of their size, their might, or their righteousness. Today, we are reminded that the Lord has not called and blessed us because of our might, our wisdom, or our goodness; we are WHAT we are, and are WHO we are, by GOD'S grace and mercy. Moses reminds the children of Israel of their rebellion three times: Exodus 32, Numbers 11 and Numbers 13. It is interesting to note that in these three instances, it is Moses' prayer and intercession that saved the people from the wrath of the Lord. *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).*

Chapter 10 begins the time of transition. The second tables are in the ark and the second priest is in his place. The tribe of Levi is chosen for the Lord and the children of Israel are told to prepare to enter the land. The next 16 chapters will be statutes and judgments for life in the new land. Now, look closely! Verse 12 is going to sum up all that is required in the next 16 chapters. *"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul."* This is the second recording of the greatest commandment. The Lord makes certain that His people understand that He wants obedience and service to come from love!

Love continues as the theme into the next chapter. Love the Lord thy God because He loves you. He showed His love with His deliverance and protection. You show your love by keeping His commandments. The new land is not like Egypt. All of Egypt is watered by the Nile through trenches into the fields. The new land will be watered by rain from Heaven. The children of Israel will be dependent on the blessing of God through rain. The Lord plainly relates the people's worship to the rain. If they will hear and do, love Him and serve Him, He will send rain. Again they are reminded: "Be sure and teach your children!" You will choose either a blessing or a curse.

Chapter 12 begins the statutes and judgments to observe in the new land. Nearly every statute in this chapter is repeated twice. Nearly every statute in this chapter is repeated twice. However, it is repeated five times that the Lord will choose the place for His name and offerings. Three times the children of Israel are reminded to rejoice! First and last, destroy the old gods and the idols. Don't even try to learn about them; just get rid of them! Moses reminds them of the offerings detailed in Leviticus, and again warns of the significance of the blood. The chapter closes with a solemn warning. Don't add to or diminish from the commandments!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE BURNT OFFERING – Deut. 12:16 (Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 10:10, 12)

TODAY'S READING: DEUTERONOMY 13-17

OVERVIEW:

Warnings against following other gods; Clean and unclean animals; Seven year release; Bond servants; Three feasts; Civil judgments; Kings

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

The Apostle Paul was concerned that the people of the church in Colosse would be deceived by the enticing words and/or empty philosophies of men (Colossians 2:4-8), and that the people of the church in Corinth would be beguiled by the subtlety of Satan (II Corinthians 11:3). In today's reading, we are reminded that there is nothing new under the sun! God's children are warned of being drawn away by three different methods in Deuteronomy 13:

1. God warns His people lest they be drawn away by someone performing signs and wonders. Miracles and powers have had a place historically in the purposes of God, but alone, have never been the test of truth (Ex. 7:11, 22: 8:7). Hello!!!
2. God warns His people lest someone using the closeness of their relationship to draw them away.
3. God warns His people lest they be drawn away by a foreign philosophy life, and/or foreign practices of worship.

The judgment that coincides with each of these is consistent: Death! The worship of the Lord and His gospel must remain pure!

Moses then reminds the children of Israel in chapter 14 that they are to remain pure and holy. In the first 2 verses, the pagan practices of the people of the land they will enter must be avoided. The list of clean and unclean animals would separate the children of Israel from the other inhabitants of the land. Because the blood could not be removed from an animal that died of itself, the children of Israel were not to eat an animal that had already died; others could eat it, but not the chosen, separate people of Israel. We, too, are a chosen people who have been called to be separate and holy (Titus 2:14; I Peter 2:9). There may be practices that are socially and culturally accepted, that have no place in the life of God's people.

The tithe in verse 22 is the second tithe that is commanded of the people

(Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26). This one is a tenth of the yearly increase of their fields. It was to be brought to the place of offering that the Lord had chosen. A portion was to be eaten with rejoicing to remember that everything comes from the blessing of the Lord. At the end of this chapter a tithe is collected for the poor. There are plenty of lessons and New Testament parallels to be drawn from the passage:

Everyone can tithe. II Corinthians 8 and 9 teach that the only prerequisite is a willing mind. We are to give according to what we have been given. When we give bountifully, we will reap bountifully. God loves a cheerful giver.

Everything we have comes from the Lord. Giving instructs and enriches the one receiving it.

Chapter 15 provides added instruction to the seventh year described in Exodus 23 and Leviticus 25. Not only is the land to rest, but debts are to be forgiven! It is a glorious reminder that our debt has been forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ! We do not have to pay the debt of sin! The debt of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and Christ has paid the debt! Verses 7 through 15 tell of generosity to the poor. Don't ever forget Christ's generosity toward us when we were poor!

The chapter finishes with consecration of the firstborn male of the herd or flock. It is set apart for the Lord. But it must be without blemish, if it is to be an offering to the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unblemished Lamb of God. As in verse 23, He was offered and His blood was poured out as water. What a perfect offering!

Three feasts are described in chapter 16. The first is the Passover followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a feast of remembrance. Remember God's deliverance. The second is the Feast of Weeks (Feast of Harvest in Exodus 23), later to be known as Pentecost. A freewill offering is to be given *"according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee."* The third feast is the Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Ingathering or Feast of Booths in Exodus 23; Leviticus 23; Numbers 29). This again is a time of giving and rejoicing.

The chapter concludes with the selection of judges and officers and warnings against false gods. Like God, judges were not to be a "respector of persons," nor were they to receive gifts from people. God wanted them to be completely free to judge righteous judgment. Another warning is given about taking up pagan practices of idol worship in groves of trees. God doesn't want any worldly practices near His altar and worship.

Chapter 17 gives statutes concerning the discovery and investigation of idol

worship. A matter of death requires the witness of two or more witnesses who must be the first in administering punishment. A matter too difficult for a judge is to be brought before the priests.

Verses 14 through 20 give instructions for a king. A king over Israel must be chosen from the children of Israel. He is commanded to not multiply to himself: horses, wives, silver and gold. When he sits on the throne he is instructed to write a copy of the law and read it everyday of his life so that he will fear the Lord, keep His words and do them; that his heart will not be lifted up and his days may be prolonged. As those who have been made kings by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:10), we should carefully consider these instructions!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As THE UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICE – Deut. 15:21 (I Peter 1:19; II Corinthians 5:21) As THE PASSOVER LAMB – Deut. 16:1 (John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:12) As THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE – Deut. 16:18; 17:8 (Revelation 19:11; Romans 14:10)

Saturday – March 4, 2017

Reflection

Now that we've been in the Book of Deuteronomy for a few days, we should have a good idea as to the intent and purpose of God preserving this Book for us. Deuteronomy could be taken as a practical commentary on the Books of Exodus and Leviticus. Since this is our day of "Reflection", it would serve as a great opportunity to remember, or better yet, commit to memory the following verses:

1 Corinthians 10:6 "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

1 Corinthians 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

God, through Paul, wrote these verses to the church at Corinth reminding them of the struggles Israel faced while on their journey through the wilderness. What is incredible about our God is that He is so merciful and gracious, He preserves verses, chapters, and Books "to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." We would all do well to pay special attention to the historical facts we're reading, realizing the consequences of the choices they made, and "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

That being said, to close out our reflection for this week of reading, be reminded of the three key words we've mention through some of our devotionals this week. Those words were "remember", "keep", and "do". We find these words in Days 59 and 60 in the context of Israel's entrance into, and also their continuance in, the land God promised to them. As God has preserved it, we were able to take this to the Book of John and apply this to us as believers. John 10:10 states "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." To quote what we read on Day 60, "This, of course, is not a reference to physical wealth and riches, but rather a relationship with God and His word, unlike the world could ever know, to the intent that through our "abundance" others would glorify God because of us." We have truly been given much, and "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required". We truly have the responsibility based on what God has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ, to "remember" all He has done; "keep" His words; and finally be "doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

SCRIPTURE REVIEW:

Numbers 33:34 “Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 4:6 “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”

Deuteronomy 6:23 “And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.”

Deuteronomy 9:7 “Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 17:19 “And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:”