



MONDAY 17 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:1-5

Plug In...

Next week a new series on Deuteronomy starts at The Lakes. Let's begin at chapter 1.

The speeches of Moses are timestamped. Month eleven of the fortieth year. This is the first time in that timeframe since they last sat on the border of the Promised Land. The first time they were on the edge of the land was at Kadesh-Barnea. This memory is injected into the setup of Moses' speech so that the people get that they've been in this position before. They could be tempted to make the same mistake again. The memory is to urge them to choose rightly.

This message on the Plains of Moab comes after successful battles against king Sihon of Heshbon and king Og of Bashan. These people are the Amorites. Last time the Israelites faced the Amorites they had been chased like a swarm of bees (1:44; cf. Numbers 14:36-45). Defeating Sihon and Og and taking the Trans-Jordan area is a reference point they can keep coming back to: trust the LORD, obey Him, and you will see success. To move forward in confidence you must remember that in the past God followed through when you trusted and obeyed.

Chew It Over...

Numbers 14 helps us see that the wilderness experience wasn't outright rejection but discipline from God because He is loving and forgiving (see esp. [Numbers 14:20-22](#)). Jesus was outright rejected in our place so that our relationship with God is now one of children to the father. In that type of relationship the Father lovingly disciplines to bring us to maturity. As part of Israel's discipline God gave them mini successes right in the area they had failed last time before taking them to the next step in obedience.

If you are enduring hardship, think through how the Lord might be disciplining you. Look to past actions the Lord has done in your life that should give you confidence to obey in this present hardship. [Reflect on [Hebrews 12:4-13](#).]

Prayer Suggestion

Thank the Lord that He cares so much for us as to not reject us. Thank Him that His love disciplines us to make us like Him. Pray that you will not lose heart.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:6-8 & Hebrews 12:1-13

Plug In...

Moses takes Israel back to the moment at Horeb when God said, “Go and take possession of the Land promised”. This is a stinging memory, for the subsequent journey should have taken eleven days (v.2). Last time they were at Kadesh-Barnea – the border to enter the land – the Promised Land was *set* before them and there for the taking. As the land was a promise from God, the Israelites should have read their forty year wandering as discipline, not rejection. It is a promise to Israel, so the person of faith would trust that there would come a day when that land would be *set* before Israel again.

The vivid recall of the promise (v.8) in effect sets the land before Israel again in this moment. And, they’ve been in this position before. There are battles to be fought to enter. The people are gigantic. The cities are fortified to the heavens! It is scary – will they make the same mistake as before?

Chew It Over...

[Hebrews 12](#) shows when we struggle against sin our loving Father disciplines us. Yet, in the discipline there is still a choice. Will we accept that this is discipline and God is good and doing this to take us to a better place, training us for a harvest of righteousness? Or,

will we say it is all too hard, and therefore God must not be good? Developing the right attitude and bolstering to make the hard, brave decisions is what God's discipline is doing in us.

We know Jesus has done everything to guarantee that we will enter heaven and be in the throne-room of God, but we still must trust Him that this is true for it to be real. To help us trust, Jesus is the one we have to look at. How was His life experienced? How did it work out for Him?

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that He brings us lessons and prompts to make sure we choose Him while we journey through life. Ask that we will heed these and each day choose to rely on Jesus and trust in what Jesus has said is right and true.



WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:9-18

Plug In...

God is supreme judge (v.18). One of the dynamics of God multiplying Israel like He promised is that leading them becomes too much for Moses to practically manage. As other leaders are installed, their responsibility boils down to passing on how God would judge and modelling that in their jurisdiction. The story of Israel so far makes this transfer of power a huge risk. Can we trust them? The track record is that they fail. Even Moses says that he can't bear the responsibility. The doubts over securing good quality leaders come to fruition for we read next the horrible judgements these new leaders make over entering the Land.

Chew It Over...

Human leaders keep gravitating to horrendously foolish decisions. A theme in Deuteronomy is that it is because of sinful human nature. The theme is particularly shown in that the great Moses is not immune. For a human to be successful at leadership it takes divine qualities. Not just divine influence, but being completely divine and completely human for a 100% result – Jesus never makes a foolish or selfish decision.

A suggestion given to Christian parents is to make sure you pray with your kids over your need to be a godly parent, i.e., you get them to pray for you in your role over them. How is this helpful in teaching this truth that emerges from Deuteronomy? How does a prayer like this point past the leader to The Leader, Jesus? Should we pray like this for all leadership roles – marriage, family, work, youth leaders, Growth Group leaders, pastors?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray with your children this prayer. Pray with your parents. Pray for your leaders. Pray with your leaders.



THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:19-25

Plug In...

The high calling of these new leaders in Israel is juxtaposed with fear of the Canaanites in the land. If they truly hold that God is the supreme judge of all the earth then that would drive out fear. Instead, we see a picture emerge where they're tentative about entering the land. Despite God saying "go" and "take it", their actions reveal distrust creeping in.

It is possible that Moses is indicating that he too slightly weakened at the knees in his trust. Moses here doesn't reference that the LORD said this plan was good, but rather Moses owns that this man-made strategy "seemed good to me". Repeated in Deuteronomy Moses says his death outside the land is on account of Israel. He is not setting himself over against them, but actually tying himself to the first generation. The first generation failed to trust the Lord and so die outside the land. The first and last chapters have the theme of dying outside the land. [Chapter 1](#), the first generation die outside the land. [Chapter 34](#), Moses dies outside the land.

Chew It Over...

Jesus never weakened in His trust of God, yet He is cursed and cut-off from the land. The Parable of the Tenants throwing the rightful son out of the vineyard and killing him carries this theme ([Matthew 21:33-44](#)). Hebrews has the theme of being 'outside' in [13:11-14](#). Three times Jesus is referred to as being outside the space of which He was meant to occupy as Messiah.

- 13:11 – The space outside the camp is somewhere in the desert (recalling either being in the land or in the wilderness).

- 13:12 – The space is outside Jerusalem, the city in the middle of the land where the king was to reside.

- 13:13 – The metaphor of being dislocated is used to encourage the readers of Hebrews to align with Jesus even if it means being in the space of rejection.

We align with Jesus in this space of rejection because we know that He was ultimately rejected by God, outside the land, outside the city, all *for us*.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank Jesus for never weakening at the knees, and being thrown outside the camp in order to open up entry for us to the location of God.



FRIDAY 21 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:26-40

Plug In...

Verse 27 shows Israel's fear of man led directly to them believing that God is not good. They go on to say that God "hates" them and did all this to be cruel to them.

Moses said the antidote to their fear was to remember that "The LORD will fight for you" (v.30). Moses explains this has been shown by the LORD going before them in every battle and has carried them "as a father carries his son".

The relationship between Israel and God was to be like a father caring for the son; like a child trusting implicitly the father has them in his arms.

Chew It Over...

The resurrection of Jesus shows us that God's plan is always good and brings about ultimate good. Even if temporarily it can seem otherwise. Jesus went to the death on the cross confident like Caleb was, wholeheartedly following the LORD.

Prayer Suggestion

You are good God. Forgive us that we doubt sometimes. Bring back to memory the past goodness that you have shown us. Build our faith. May we also be reminded of the good shown to Jesus, a wonderful goodness you did on behalf of us. Help us to follow you wholeheartedly.



WEEKEND 22-23 APRIL 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 1:41-46

Plug In...

This story shows that success only occurs with the LORD's presence (v.42). The LORD's presence or not was a matter of life and death.

Chew It Over...

The Old Testament from the beginning and no less in Deuteronomy, establishes the way the covenant works.

Obedience equals God's presence; disobedience equals removal of God's presence.

God's presence equals life; lack of God's presence equals death.

Given Israel's failure to sustain what is needed for God's presence, given our failure to sustain what is needed, thank God for Jesus fulfilling the obedience we need. Now even as we sin, today, tomorrow, God's presence is not removed. In a strange reversal, God's presence now resides within us as the Holy Spirit works to make us obedient. All this before we are actually fully obedient.

Prayer Suggestion

God is so kind and gracious. He carries us all the way. Praise Him over this.