



# MONDAY 15 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 4:41-43

### Plug In...

Deuteronomy 4 makes a small mention of Moses setting up three cities of refuge. This is sandwiched between the close of Moses' speech and the opening of another speech about the Ten Commandments (chap. 5). If someone commits manslaughter they are protected in these cities of refuge. Deuteronomy 19 explains the reason for these cities – a safe place where justice can take place, evidence produced, and the innocent are protected. "Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land" ([19:10](#)). God's Land is to be a land of justice.

Moses urges Israel to obey God because the Land is to be a place where things go well for the community, they and their children experience life and live long (4:40). Now that some of the Promised Land (the Trans-Jordan area) has been acquired, immediately they are to be a land characterised by justice, fairness, mercy.

### Chew It Over...

Christians are to be people that embody justice. We've seen that God desires justice and fairness for His people Israel. This is a principle from the character of God. The Australian legal principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' mimics God's character displayed in these cities of refuge.

Think about ways our behaviour and words may rob a Christian brother or sister of justice and fairness. The cities of refuge imply things go wrong even within God's people. How should we keep the person that does wrong safe and protected within our church?

[We will find [Galatians 6:1-6](#) helpful in sorting this out.]

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Ask the Lord to make you conscious of whether you destroy or build up. Request we will extend the safety of Jesus that we enjoy to other brothers and sisters.



TUESDAY 16 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 4:44-49

### Plug In...

The Ten Commandments are about to be reiterated. The previous time they were given was the moment a covenantal agreement was formed between God and Israel (Exodus 19:5). Once given, the people agreed and sealed the covenant (Exodus 24:3-8).

Before the narrator gives the content of Moses reiterating the Ten Commandments, there is another delay to make mention of their redemption from Egypt, and their recent defeat of Sihon's kingdom and Og's kingdom.

### Chew It Over...

What things should this history remind the listeners of? How should it motivate?

Do you feel your ability to obey Jesus and your trust in Him is wavering? What do you need to recall – *remember* – to persevere? (Reflect on [2 Peter 1:3-11](#).)

### Prayer Suggestion

Pray for one another. May grace and peace be ours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.



WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 5:1-5

### Plug In...

Three powerful verbs lead what Moses said to Israel: “hear”, “learn”, “obey” (v.1). The Israelites would have heard a resonance in this sentence. ‘Hear’ in Hebrew is pronounced *shema* and ‘take care’ or ‘guard’ is pronounced *shemar*. The opening line pops audibly to punctuate the air with seriousness. It does it by loading up the things Israel must do, and stresses the importance by getting the words to sink in through the rhythm.

Further, the back story to first receiving these commands to hear, learn, and obey is the threatening holiness of God where the Israelites said to Moses, ‘Could you stand in for us, we don’t think we’ll survive’. [See [Exodus 20:18-21](#).]

### Chew It Over...

The New Testament shows us that in Jesus, God is imminently more approachable and not to be feared thanks to the work of the High Priest Jesus [[Hebrews 12:18-25](#) cf. [Hebrews 10:19-25](#)].

Yet it still remains that we must hear and respond to God’s word about Jesus. Moses encouraged Israel to hear, learn, obey. We are encouraged about Jesus by the writer to the Hebrews to listen, respond, follow, and hold on in obedience. We are encouraged to keep encouraging others. [Hebrews [10:24-25](#); [12:15-16](#).]

What do you now need to set in motion to be this important encourager?

### Prayer Suggestion

Who have you given me Lord to encourage today?



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THURSDAY 18 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 5:6-7

### Plug In...

These laws come from the covenant made between God and Israel. God tells them He is their LORD God and He brought them out of Egypt, the land of slavery. They shall have no other gods before Him. Their God and His character is then proclaimed.

### Chew It Over...

We are getting into Old Testament law. Some of it, like the Ten Commandments, still sounds so applicable. Soon some laws like, 'Do not eat bacon' will be mentioned ([Deuteronomy 14:8](#)). Why do we not obey this law but still obey the first Commandment to have no other gods? ? [Deuteronomy 5:2](#) is an important detail. It locates these laws in a particular covenant, with a particular people, at a particular time: with Israel at Horeb (here on called the 'Mosaic covenant'). That background story must be remembered. God is not immediately talking to Central Coasties, but to ancient Israel – the agreement was made with them.

God saw Israel couldn't keep the Mosaic covenant so brings hope to Israel by a new covenant ([Hebrews 8:7-13](#)). This new covenant comes by Jesus keeping the Mosaic covenant (fulfilling it – [Matthew 5:17](#)). Where Israel ultimately couldn't keep the agreement, Christ did! ([Galatians 3:10-14](#).) Therefore, being under the new covenant Paul will say Christians are not under the Law (meaning the Mosaic covenant) – [Galatians 3:24-25](#).

So why bother reading the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy? Because the character of God and His holiness are unchanging ([Psalm 102:25-28](#)) and gets injected into all of God's covenants. What God is about and His concerns do emerge in the Mosaic covenant, but they are packaged specifically for Israel, living as a theocratic

nation, in a very specific geographic Land. Sometimes it seems like the New Testament is saying keep the Ten Commandments, but as Paul shows it cannot be – that would regress to the Mosaic covenant. Now, we do follow Jesus under the new covenant, and it is the same God behind the Mosaic Covenant and Jesus who brings the New Covenant. So, having no other gods before God is grounded in the character of God and gets expressed in all covenants. We have no other gods before God not because it is the 'First Commandment', but because we follow Jesus' covenantal laws (under the New Covenant). Yet both covenants express the same thing in similar language (*cf.* [Matthew 6:24](#)).

We work back from Old Testament laws to the character of God and His holiness and see that it is applicable even in the New Covenant which we access by Jesus alone.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Help us Lord God to learn more about you, what you value from Israel's law in order to navigate what mimicking your character looks like today. Thank you for the example of Jesus.



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FRIDAY 19 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 5:8-11

### Plug In...

Verse 11 says, “Do not use the LORD’s name in vain”. Israel are going into a Land where the normal practices are at odds with God. It is normal for Egyptians, Amorites, Canaanites to all have idols. Israel not having one would have been strange to them. Likewise, the surrounding cultures would invoke their god’s name like a magic formula to sway the world to move as they wish.

God tells Israel, when they use His name they must not use it for vanity (literally: worthless ends).

### Chew It Over...

It is horrible to hear Jesus’ name used as a cuss word. But here it is more about saying God’s name in a way that the person tries to manipulate Him for their own personal, worthless ends.

We are called to use Jesus’ name in prayer. But that name shapes the prayer – [John 14:12-14](#).

### Prayer Suggestion

Pray in Jesus’ name.



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## WEEKEND 20-21 MAY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

## Read: Deuteronomy 5:12-15

### Plug In...

The sabbath is framed so the people of God remember clearly their dependence on God alone. In Egypt, under slavery, the Israelites never rested. Here, to stop and enjoy life without hard labour was a gift of God, part of their redemption.

### Chew It Over...

Again, we are not to somehow think the Ten Commandments are moral laws and therefore should be kept as New Testament Christians. Christians don't approach the Ten Commandments as requirements to sit under, for that would be to return to the Mosaic Law ([Galatians 3:24-25](#)). We look at how God's character and holiness are expressed to Israel in their situation and apply that as expressed in Jesus under the New Covenant.

So what does the Fourth Commandment show us about God that we need to live life in the light of? ([Matthew 11:25 – 12:8](#) has to be considered as we seek an answer).

### Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that we now experience rest from Satan's control, sin's entrapment. Thank you that we have been freed in Jesus and therefore rest everyday located in Him.