



MONDAY 31 JULY 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 7:1-26

Plug In...

This week we return to Deuteronomy at chapter 7. Chapter 6 highlighted that true love for God issues in obedience to His commands ([Deuteronomy 6:1-9](#)).

The reason for the war against the Canaanites is theological. God will destroy idolatry for the sake of His people. The emphasis isn't on the Canaanites sinfulness (although true, see [9:4](#)). The rationale for the war is to keep Israel pure and devoted to God alone (vv.15-16). Idolatry is active *hate* against God (v.10). Idolatry in the Land makes it sick; people get sick, they die and will be destroyed (vv.12-14, 26). God is ready to forgive sin (v.9), but if people turn to something other than God, there is no option left for forgiveness.

Chew It Over...

This chapter is horrific. What we've read should thump our sensibilities. God *destroys* idols and idolaters. God's righteousness insists destruction for idolatry. Jesus' death should convince us of this. God's righteousness demands justice, so He destroys Jesus in place of idolaters.

In Jesus, God reveals Himself as compassionate and loving. We must approach today distressed that people *actively hate God* ([Acts 17:16](#)). First, because God should rightly be honoured as holy. Second, without Jesus in their place, they will be utterly ruined ([Acts 17:31](#)).

Look around, awaken your grief for your friends. They want safety and security, that is what their idols falsely promise. God has set an impending Day, where He destroys idolatry. Does our distress drive us to tell them about Jesus?

Prayer Suggestion

Oh, that we would care for the honour of God's name amongst our community. Oh, that we would feel the pain that our friends and family do not see. May God warn them as He warned us. Use us this week Lord for we understand time does run out.



TUESDAY 1 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 8:1-20

Plug In...

Between leaving Egypt and entering Canaan was a hard desert walk. Even before the rebellion incident ([Numbers 14](#)) the walk was tough. Desert-walk from Egypt through desert to Sinai (Horeb). Then from Horeb through wilderness to Canaan. Although arduous, each was relatively short. First leg: 3 months ([Exodus 19:1-2](#)). The last leg: should have been just eleven days ([Deuteronomy 1:2](#)). Moses explains the period between exit and entering was where God tested what truly was in Israel's heart (vv.3-5). God removed the natural props and supports humans took for granted so they might rely totally on Him.

On each leg of the journey, the Israelites completely give up on God and charge Him with harm and hatred towards them. [Watch this moment immediately after the great redemption event, [Exodus 14:10-14](#); see another moment soon after deliverance from the barrier of the Red Sea, [Exodus 14:22-24](#); then days later [Exodus 16:3](#); and yet again, [Exodus 17:1-3](#) – all before they even got to Sinai].

In Exodus, the warning is don't let a period of deprivation let you give up on God. Now, the warning of Deuteronomy 8 is when God abundantly provides, don't forget it was God who gave (vv. 12-15); even worse deluding yourself it was by your power and prowess (v.17).

Chew It Over...

Deuteronomy chapter 8 depicts human nature. It reveals that if left to ourselves, whether in good or bad circumstances, we will slide away from God. Hard times expose what our hearts really beat to – God disciplines to see what we're made of.

Jesus under great deprivation ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)), even to the point of losing it all ([Matthew 26:36-46](#)), showed a heart that still staked it all on God.

Similar to Israel, we have been redeemed and are headed to heaven. We could grumble and let go of God. We could distort and claim whatever good we have we've built on our own. And, given the reality Deuteronomy 8 says, what hope does the Christian have? Read [Romans 5:1-5](#). Given we share the same human nature as Israel, spot from this passage what is the critical difference for the Christian than for most of Israel at the time of Moses?

Prayer Suggestion

There is a wonderful prayer Paul gives at the end of Romans based on this critical difference. As you see this, use this prayer to inspire your response to God today.

[\[Romans 16:25-27.\]](#)



WEDNESDAY 2 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 9:1-24

Plug In...

With repetitive stress, Moses says, 'Understand, you are not receiving the Land because of your righteousness' (vv.5-6).

Moses gives example after example of their unrighteousness. The retelling of the story shows sin with a high hand. This is not unrighteousness in ignorance. For Israel, they are deeply deliberate and disloyal.

Chew It Over...

The many narratives of the Bible, whether looking at Israel from a birds-eye view, or zooming in close to a particular person, say a king, show us that human beings need saving from themselves. No matter the goodness God shows them, no matter even the best of the good kings (e.g. King David), human nature is disloyal to God.

These chapters urge God's people to not forget you need saving from yourself. Don't let this view of human nature, or of yourself, slip from view. You can help see things rightly by committing to keep reading the Old Testament stories. Don't identify with the hero of the story (even if there is a random stand out human), because we're the bad guys in the story. God sends a hero to save all the bad guys from themselves.

Such reading postures us in humility, confession, and an attitude of repentance. To such people God promises to save them from themselves. [See how Peter holds up a mirror to his audience. And see their response: [Acts 2:37-40.](#)]

Prayer Suggestion

Confess. Repent. Praise God that all is forgiven. Worship God for He is safe!



THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 9:25-29 & Luke 23:32-34

Plug In...

As Moses came back down the mountain of Horeb/Sinai with the covenant just given, the Israelites *already* had violated it. Moses smashes the covenant tablets, displaying that the covenant had been shattered ([9:15-17](#)). Look what Moses does next. He appeals to the basis of God's nature not the covenant.

Chew It Over...

Feel the horrendousness of what Israel has just done. Can we see the same 'in-your-face' snub we still do to God?

Spend time looking at how Moses prays to God – notice the words of appeal on their behalf.

See how Jesus appeals to God on our behalf – [Luke 23:32-34](#).

Prayer Suggestion

Appeal to God's nature on behalf of people that come to your mind today – [1 Timothy 2:1-7](#).



FRIDAY 4 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 10:1-22

Plug In...

Chiselling two more stone tablets shows God answered Moses' prayer. The second generation of Israelites about to enter the Land are there only because God forgave in grace. Now, they must have complete allegiance to God (vv.12-13).

Verse 16, literally: "*Circumcise the foreskin of your heart*". The metaphor uses the covenant sign given to Abraham ([Genesis 17:1-14](#)). Allegiance only comes from loving God (10:12-13), so to have that level of loyalty you need to set your heart, which – like circumcision – involved decision and action symbolising allegiance.

The following verse 17, shows God does not accept bribes. God wants a completely faithful heart. To circumcise outwardly – follow any of the laws – yet not love God is trying to bribe God. He won't accept anything less than complete love from the centre out.

Chew It Over...

First, Israel never gets this level of commitment from the heart. But God promises to provide it for them in the future ([30:1-10](#)).

Second, we see Jesus does something to His people's hearts after His work on the cross – check out [Luke 24:13-45](#).

Third, Deuteronomy 10:18-19 connects God's love with a responsive love to Him seen in love to neighbour (especially the weak, vulnerable, homeless, and powerless). To do such actions requires real love more so than other actions (e.g. say for Israel, circumcision, or some sacrifices and rituals can be done mechanically). So, the actions

more bound up with love as their character become stronger indexes as to our love for God. The New Testament teaches the same simple flow on effect: love for God issues in love for neighbour. [[Matthew 24:34-40](#); [Romans 13:8-10](#).]

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to measure your love for Him against real-time opportunities. Pray for true self-evaluation as to how you love your neighbour – defined in [Leviticus 19](#) as your family, the poor, the disabled, the refugee amongst us, as a citizen, even towards our enemies ([Lev. 19:18](#)).



WEEKEND 5-6 AUGUST 2017

SERIES: DEUTERONOMY – CHOOSE LIFE

Read: Deuteronomy 11:1-25 & 2 Corinthians 4:1 – 5:5

Plug In...

This chapter shows that the Land signposts the relationship with God. When flourishing agriculturally, environmentally, securely, and relationally, then love of God (which is shown by obedience) is happening. If disloyal to God then the inverse occurs: enemies trample them, rains stop, stock and family members die (detailed in [Deuteronomy 28:15-68](#)).

Chew It Over...

The Old Testament shows it is the specific work of the Spirit (third person of the Trinity) to create, transform and give life. At creation, the Spirit moves across the surfaces of the waters ([Genesis 1:1](#); cf. [Psalm 104:27-30](#)) and then enters Adam ([Genesis 2:7](#); cf. [Job 33:4](#) & [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)). The promise of a new heart is by the creative work of the Spirit ([Ezekiel 36:26-27](#)). The new creation will be created and fertile through the life-giving agent of the Spirit ([Isaiah 32:9-20](#)).

Life and death for the land (creation), and for humanity is connected to spirituality. It is no mere metaphor that the new heart's obedience is called 'fruits of the Spirit' (e.g. [Galatians 5:22-23](#)). The Spirit's enlivening and generating work creates anew our hearts, to be followed by our resurrection bodies, fit for the following new environment (heaven and earth). The Spirit creates everything. No wonder the Christian, with a Spirit-created heart, is called in Christ a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

Prayer Suggestion

Read [2 Corinthians 4 – 5:5](#). Specifically list all the aspects of the Spirit's creational work in your life, making your heart flourish, all to culminate one day in a fertile new creation.