

AT A CROSSROADS, PART 8: REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

10/8/2017 - Matt Heerema - Deuteronomy 9&10 - Topic: Humility

Key verse: Deuteronomy 9:7 (ESV)

"Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord."

SUMMARY: *Wrapping up the first section of his sermon to the new generation of Israelites, who are about to at last enter the promised land, Moses reminds the nation who they are: stubborn, rebellious, and undeserving, yet loved, chosen, and cherished nation. He exhorts them to never forget this fact, as they are about to enter the promised land. He reminds us today to keep in view who we are without him: stubborn and rebellious,. He also reminds us that with Him we are loved and chosen. This reminder will keep our hearts in the right posture of humility, gratefulness, joy, and confidence in God's love for us as His children.*

INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy chapter 9. We'll be picking up our walk-through of this book of the Bible here. I am excited for today, and I hope you are too, because if we walk through today's passage story carefully, and trace the narrative that Moses is reviewing here, we're see two very important trust, both very easy to grasp, but difficult to hold on to, that will help us keep our hearts in a right posture of humility, gratefulness, joy, and confidence in God.

These truths both fall under my title for today, an exhortation that Moses gives Israel, and that follows through the scripture even to us sitting here today: that we must "Remember who we are."

GOD GIVES THE VICTORY...

READ: Deuteronomy 9:1-3

- Remember where Deuteronomy begins? Refusing to enter the promised land because of the Anakim. Here we are again.
- "Okay guys, today, we're going to try this again. The Anakim are still there, but don't do what your parents did this time."
- One difference this time: Previously, "go take it!" Now: God himself is going to conquer.

...NOT BECAUSE OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

READ: Deuteronomy 9:4-6

- This is a very important part of the explanation or apologetic of Israel conquering the land of Canaan, driving all the other nations out. How can this be right and just of God to do?
- A foundational point, one that is often neglected, in helping explain why God gave the nation of Israel the promised land after taking it away from the Canaanites, is that it had *nothing to do with any moral superiority of Israel*. They did not deserve that land. It was there's, by divine right, but not because they were so wonderful and marvelous and morally upright and superior.
- Moses goes to great pains in this chapter to anchor in their souls, and in ours, that the blessing of God, when it is given to us, has nothing at all to do with something inherent to ourselves.
- We ought never assume that when God chooses a people, that they are inherently "better people." One way I've heard this put is that will help us is that there are non-believing people out there who are upstanding, ethical, morally upright, "good people".
- I'm stressing this point because Moses does, and it is one of the most practical applications of the story for us. Save yourself some trouble, and don't every get into an argument where you are trying to prove that Christians are somehow necessarily more ethically upright, and that unbelievers are necessarily morally bankrupt.
- Back to the story though, let me just repeat Moses, it was because of the wickedness of the Canaanites, as proven over hundreds of years of a culture that reveled in things that were detestable to God, that the Israelites were to kick them out of the land.
- I'd encourage you to go back and listen to Dave's message on chapter 7. God is bringing judgement to Canaan. He is using Israel as His tool, and a big part of the point of Deuteronomy is a warning, that if Israel walks the way the Canaanites did, that they too will be expelled from the land. In fact that is exactly what ends up happening.

REMEMBER AND DO NOT FORGET YOUR REBELLIOUSNESS.

This is the first great truth that we must keep in mind. We must remember our rebelliousness. Moses wants them to keep this reality firmly in their mind as they enter the promised land, and he wants them to remember it, from generation to generation, forever.

Deuteronomy 9:7 (ESV)

7 Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.

SUMMARIZE: Deuteronomy 9:7-24

The events he describes here are not in chronological order, they are not intended to be. You'll find that Moses in the Pentateuch, in the first five books of the Bible, often is not concerned with precision in timelines and order. That's actually a relatively modern and western concern. The point is the contents of the story. The lack of chronology makes his point crystal clear: You have a big problem, your rebellion.

- Since you left Egypt:
 - At Horeb (Sinai) - that whole golden calf incident. Moses spends some time on this to show just how egregious the offense was.
 - Taberah - complaining because of their "misfortunes" even though God was leading them directly and driving out enemies before them, they never lacked for food, and their clothing did not wear out.
 - Massah - "Is the Lord among us or not?" You know, while being present in the pillar of fire and clouds, had split the Red Sea and caused the Egyptian army to perish..."
 - Kibroth-Hattaavah - "Let's go back to Egypt where we had better food!"
 - Kadesh-barnea - "EEK! The Anakim!"

Deuteronomy 9:24 (ESV)

24 You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.

YOU NEEDED A MEDIATOR.

SUMMARIZE: 9:25-29

God is ready to destroy Israel because of their continual rebellion. It can be tempting to feel like this is an overreaction, but that is only because we don't give adequate thought to who God is, and what He deserves as the creator.

Have you given much thought to how horrific the golden calf incident was? God had just gotten through rescuing this nation out of terrible slavery. All of the wealth of Egypt goes with them. They get to see His physical presence in a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, so they know exactly where He is and where they need to go.

They see that same cloud and fire on top of mount Sinai, where He is giving Moses His direct commands to the nation.

And yet their response is something like: "I don't know. Is Moses ever coming down? Here's an idea, let's just create a new god and worship it. Then we can have something to carry around with us and say "here's our god!" wherever we want to go. Let's decide to make it into the shape of a baby cow." How offensive is this?

Knowing of God's wrath, Moses fell on his face for a second miraculous 40-day-and-night fast and begged God to not wipe the people out. I will confess that this section of the scripture, and its parallel in Exodus has been probably the single most confounding section of scripture to me from a theological standpoint. God listens to Moses's prayer, and relents. How does that work with God's overarching plan? Was God throwing a cosmic rage fest and Moses calmed Him down?

I don't think so. You paint yourself into some pretty bad theological corners if you take from this anything that says less than God knew exactly what He was doing, and exactly how it would turn out. God was revealing to Israel, His rightful wrath toward rebellion, but He's also setting something else up for us: the prayer of intercession by a mediator on behalf of His people.

God is saying: this is how I am going to interact with you from here out. Starting with Moses, working through the priestly line, and culminating ultimately in Jesus, God's people have had God's wrath turned aside through the prayer and sacrifice of a mediator.

GOD LISTENED TO HIM, AND RELENTED...

SUMMARIZE: 10:1-11

A cool little side-note about the ark. Have you ever thought about this? With the golden calf, Israel had created something, according to their own plans, to carry around among them to say "here's our God." With the ark, God had Moses create something that Israel could carry around with them, according to His own design, in fact it carried His very words with it wherever they went. What an amazing example of how God condescends to us to help us along. He is so merciful and right and good!

...BECAUSE HE LOVES US. SO LOVE HIM.

And now we're coming to the end of our passage here today, and the second great truth that we must remember and never forget.

READ: 10:12-15

Deuteronomy 10:15 (ESV)

15 Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

READ: 10:16-22

What an amazing conclusion to this first part of his sermon. Moses casts his gaze all the way up at the majesty and glory and bigness of God, yet God's intimate closeness in love toward His people.

And the "so what?" for Israel? Verses 12&13. **(read)**

APPLICATION - REMEMBER, AND NEVER FORGET: YOUR REBELLION, AND GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU.

So good for Israel. What about us?

We don't want to mythologize and allegorize this. "When you go to enter *your* "promised land" (however you've defined it...) - trust that God is going before you and will give you the victory!" - We see this sort of teaching a lot, hear it on the radio, see it on TBN (which you should never watch.)

But, I hope you can see the immediate and very direct application here. I hope that if you have any familiarity with the whole story of the Bible, any experience with the Christian life that this is so plain to you. We are just like Israel. In fact, according to Romans 9-11, we are *part* of Israel!

We recognize the train of thought in Deuteronomy 9 and 10 from even our new testament readings, don't we? It is identical to Ephesians 2:1-10. But whereas Moses spends a majority of the time lining out the rebellion piece, Paul spends the majority lining out the merciful, loving, grace of God in the face of our rebelliousness.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This is us. We see ourselves in Moses's exhortation.

Church, we must remember and never forget:

- We have been rebellious against the Lord.
- Yet the Lord set His heart in love on us.
- We are to love, serve, and hold fast to Him, and no other.