

Choose and Choose Again

Usually when we study the Bible, we do so a passage at a time, looking at and reflecting on words, phrases and individual verses in that passage. Many rich and helpful truths are missed when we read too quickly over the detailed aspects of a story or a speech in the Old Testament.

Last week, for instance, we learned that Korah's rebellion was especially insidious because he already had one of the most significant leadership roles in all of Israel. Dathan and Abiram taunted Moses with the question, "You want to blind our eyes because you don't like what we see!" That tied in with God's warning to wear tassels with a blue thread to remind them not to "follow after your own heart and your own eyes" (Numbers 15:39).

But another illuminating way to study the Bible is to look at key passages within a whole book. This week we will look at present-day applications to truths and principles in Deuteronomy, the Book of Words. Although our focus will be on chapters 29 & 30, I wanted to give you a sampling of several other themes and passages:

- 4:1-8 What differentiates and advantages us in our day to day living -- compared to all the other peoples in the world -- is simply how well we know and pay attention to what the Bible says. That is the nearness of God even before we call upon Him.
- 6:4-9 Always remember that the Lord our God is One. He is before all else, and His words and way establish everything else. Though He stands alone, needing nothing, He extends His all-sufficiency to us in love and support. He is the One and the Only. But He welcomes us to join Him.
- 8:1-20 Even when we go through desert times, we can rely on the fact that God is still doing us good. He never wavers from His determination to do us good in the end, even if we must go through difficult things for a season. Deserts humble our heart, and they bring to the surface attitudes and thoughts that would eventually disqualify us from the Promise Land.
- 10:12-22 Bottom line, what does God really want from us? He wants us to remember that He is the final authority in life. He asks us to walk in His paths and to love Him with everything within us.
- 11:22-28 Coming into our full inheritance (receiving all the things God has bequeathed to us) will always involve two key elements. First, we can't get there without following His detailed instructions. We'll just get lost if we try to make it on our own. Second, what belongs to us is being possessed by our enemies. We must drive out the squatters *before* we can set up our own home.

- 17:8-20 Because the world is so broken, life cannot function smoothly without submission to authority. Counsel and instruction from people in authority -- whether it is spiritual or administrative -- must always be according to the Words of God. Leaders are to make reading the Bible a daily practice so that they do not turn aside from what it says.
- 18:9-14 Divination, witchcraft, astrology, fortune telling, seances, spells, magic potions, and all other occult practices are expressly forbidden. Magic arts, communing with the dead or channeling with spirit teachers are practices of those peoples God drove away. We must renounce all such dabblings and involvements.
- 24:1-4 Divorce and remarriage are not simple issues, and God has definite perspectives on them that may not be obvious to the natural thinker. We must be careful -- in our desire to be accepting and loving toward people -- that we do not lay aside timeless truths.

Chapter 29 The Blessing and the Curse of the Covenant

- vs. 1-9 Review of their history with God, and all He has done for them.
- vs. 10-29 Entering into covenant with God, becoming His people, means that they will not align themselves with any other god or any other practices. Otherwise, they will lose their inheritance and their blessing.

Chapter 30 Restoration from the Curse and a Chance to Choose Again

1. When we break covenant with God, we become **scattered** and **exiled**.
2. **Repentance** leads to **restoration** and increased obedience.
3. What God asks us to do is **not too difficult** for us to obey. We can obey Him **right here, right now** in the midst of **these** circumstances.
4. Life is a **choice** ... and the **consequences** of that choice ... day after day.