

Deuteronomy ch 31

As we draw nearer and nearer to the close of the book of Deuteronomy Moses is preparing to die. And in his last days he is rehearsing for the children of Israel the need for absolute obedience to the law of God if they are to have the blessing of God on their lives as individuals and as a nation. And he's been speaking to them of the blessing that will follow their obedience vs the curse that will follow disobedience. And we left off last week with the fact of how near God is to each and every one of us, and salvation is as near to each person as is their very heart and mouth. That if one believes in their heart upon the Lord Jesus, in the fact that He was crucified for the sake of our sin and God raised Him from the dead for our justification, and confesses Him with their mouth's the bible says that we will be saved. But believing is a matter of choice, you can choose to believe that Jesus Christ raised from the dead, thereby attesting to the fact of what He declared; that He was in-fact the Son of God come down from heaven to bear the sins of man in order that He might give to all who believe in Him eternal life, the resurrection making the hope of eternal life a reality, securing that hope, giving substance to that hope. Or you can choose that Jesus didn't rise from the dead (to not believe that He was ever even here is only foolish, even secular history records His existence.) So you can choose to believe that He rose from the dead, or that He didn't, but that somehow His disciples gave to the guards of the tomb some sort of spiked drinks. And when they passed out they all heaved hoe on the stone, stole the body of Jesus, took it off by stealth somewhere else, buried it where no one would ever find it, and then they all got together and devised this story of how they found the tomb empty, the linen clothes that He was wrapped in lying there in form but with no body in them and the handkerchief that had been around His head not with the linen but rather folded neatly lying in a place by itself. And you can believe that they made a pact with in themselves that they would stick to the story and that no matter what happened they would all stick to it. Even it meant their own lives, and history records for us that that's exactly what it cost them, this gospel message that they preached cost each of them their lives in a horribly violent and gruesome way with the exception of John of whom it would appear that he simply died of old age. But it wasn't for a lack of trying to kill him, tradition holds that he was boiled in oil but when he wouldn't die, he was exiled to Patmos where he was given the book of Revelation. But the rest of them all died this violent death for this lie that they told, now, Satan has a philosophy concerning man. And we find it in the book of Job when Satan presented himself before God and God said to him, hey, have you been considering my servant Job, he's an upright man, loves good and hates evil. And Satan expressed a philosophy concerning Job, he said, "*Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.*" In other words, God, Job is just a mercenary, his business goes to the highest bidder, and so the way that you've blessed that man, of course he's going to serve you, anyone would be fool not to serve you if you blessed them like that. Job's just in it for the benefits, let me take away his riches and his goods and he'll curse you to your face.

And so after receiving permission from God to attack Job in this manner, which is another point in and of itself, Satan can't touch the child of God with out God's permission.

But Satan took away everything he owned, killed all of his servants and even his own children, and after Satan had wiped him out completely, the last servant had come to him with the news of destruction we read that "*Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."* In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong." He didn't say oh God doesn't love me any more, God must hate me, he didn't charge God with wrong, and so Satan returned to the presence of God having just finished up his portion of crow pie. And God said to him, hey where have you been? And Satan said well I've been cruising around the world, "*going to and fro on the earth, and walking back and forth on it.*" And God said so have you checked out My servant Job, (God's bragging on him a little) he's a good man, blameless and upright, a man who loves God and fears God, a man who shuns and hates evil. His philosophy had failed, and so Satan offered a 2nd philosophy and he said, "*Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.*" And that my friends is a pretty accurate estimation of man, life is the most precious possession that we have, and all that a man has will he give for his life. Why, because if we don't have our lives, what good is it to have anything, so when it comes down to the brass tax, your life, (this side of eternity) is your most valued possession. That was Satan's philosophy, and having a long time to study human nature, I'd say the estimation is an accurate one. Psychologists will tell you that self-preservation is the strongest natural instinct that you possess. They agree with Satan's evaluation, who knows maybe they were inspired, now my point in all this is that in that we're faced with a problem. Because if a man will give all that he has for his life, and all of these men gave their lives for a lie saying that Jesus rose from the dead when in reality He didn't, it was just a big hoax, you've got to explain why all of these men were willing to give their lives for a hoax. How did every one of them overcome mans strongest natural instinct of self-preservation, and just allow themselves to be tortured and wasted for a lie. So you can choose to believe that the account of the resurrection was a hoax, or that it was the truth, if you believe that it was all made up, then you've got some real problems having to explain away the logic of it all. But if you believe that it was the truth you've got no problems, it all makes sense and all of these guys bore witness of that fact. Many times you can read a vs that says and we bear witness of this, the fact that Jesus Christ suffered and died and rose again from the dead. So you're believing the mouths of witness, and you refuse to believe all these witnesses, then you'd better throw out our whole jurisprudence system because the whole thing is based on the establishing of the facts as testified by witnesses. You get 2 or more people agreeing together that this is what happened, so if you don't believe the testimony of witnesses then throw out our entire justice system because that's what it's based on.

So to narrow this back down into the scope of our text, God sets before us a choice, He's given us free will, and it's His desire that you would choose life and not death, the evidence is there, the blessing lies there for you to receive, and God isn't willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and we see that even in vs 19-20 of ch 30 (read).

And now as Moses is inching toward his death it's time for him to ordain, or inaugurate Israel's next leader, whom God has raised up, Joshua.

Vs1-2

Moses is saying hey, my season here on earth has drawn to a close, it's time for me to move on, Paul the apostle said much the same type thing when he was about ready to be martyred for the gospel. He said, "*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*" Moses said, I can no longer go out and come in, it wasn't that he was physically diminished we read that that wasn't the case, but he had run his course and the time of his departure was at hand. Besides it's time for them to cross over the Jordan and the Lord had told Moses that he wouldn't be going with them, and it's interesting to me that Moses was unable to take them into the fullness of the blessings of God. Moses being represented by the law could only bring them to the land, he couldn't usher them in. It couldn't give them the fullness of the blessing of God for their lives; it could only lead them to that point where by they were ready to enter in. It was Joshua that took them in, Joshua being the Hebrew word for what is rendered in the Greek as Jesus. God is salvation, the law could only lead them to the brink, but it was the grace of God through faith that Joshua that took them in.

And so in our lives we recognize that the law can't bring us into the fullness of the blessings of God in the life led by the Spirit, we enter into that by faith through God's grace, Gal 3:24-25 "*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*" It's by faith that we enter into the life led by the Spirit as we abide in Christ.

Vs3-4

Remember that Og was a giant who stood around 12 feet tall give or take a foot, and so Moses is encouraging them saying hey, those whom you feared the most, God gave into your hand and granted you victory over seemingly insurmountable odds. So don't lose heart, God will continue to grant you victory with or without me. Moses is trying to instill in them the fact that their victories had nothing to do with him, they had everything to do with the Lord.

And so even though Moses won't be with them anymore the Lord still will be, and He's the one who goes before you and fights your battles for you and it's in Him that we find strength and boldness and victory. The work of God isn't contingent upon any man, so often we think that we're so invaluable to the work of God and that if we weren't here the work would cease. But God doesn't need us to do His work, we're not essential to the plan of God, now by His grace He uses us, but billions of people have lived and died in the history of the world and yet God's work is still moving forward with or without those people. And if we don't want to do it, God will just find someone else who does, and if a work ceases after your gone, then maybe it wasn't God's anyway, because God's work isn't determined by man, God's work is accomplished regardless of man. Now many times we can through sin or something displeasing to God in our lives we can quench a certain move of God, but that work of God will funnel over to someone else who's blameless before Him in the person of His Son and just keep right on moving. (So)

Vs5-8

Highlight that in your bible, it's God who goes before you and will never leave you nor forsake you.

And it was important that Joshua know that because Moses is saying O.K. Joshua you're taking over, and this is more than stepping into the senior pastorate of an up and coming church. You've just been made accountable for millions of people; fear would grip your heart. And so Moses says hey Joshua be strong and of good courage, you've looked to me all these years, it wasn't me, it was the Lord and He is the One who goes before you and He will be with you, and He'll never leave you nor forsake you so don't be afraid, and he comforts Joshua.

Now often times people debate as to who it was who wrote the law, and if they would only read their bibles they'd find out.

Vs9-11

So every 7yrs in the year of release the priests were to read the law to all the people, now we've taken several months in this book so no doubt that was an awesome experience. Now in the book of Nehemiah we find that as Ezra opened the book of the law that all the people stood up and they stood from morning till evening while the law was read. And all the people began to weep and repent for how they had failed God and they would explain the law of God to the people and this would go on for several days, from morning till evening, so those of you that think church services are to long, they would stand outside from morning till evening while the law was read and explained, and their they would repent before God.

Vs12

Remember that not all of the family was required at all the feasts, but at this time they were to all journey to the appointed place, men, women and children, and they would have to leave their homes and make the journey by faith, trusting in God's protection over their stuff while they were gone. And no doubt as they would travel they would be reminded of the Exodus and how God led them by the hand of Moses for 40yrs through the wilderness which would make for them an ideal time to receive the law. And notice that they were to hear it, to learn it, to fear the Lord, and carefully observe or do all of the words of this law. So during this time dads and sons alone wasn't sufficient, the whole family came to the reading of the scriptures.

And even so today I believe that it's absolutely critical that we as the men of our homes and the spiritual leaders who are accountable before God for our homes, bring the whole family to the reading of the scriptures. That we would set an example of diligence in our desire to learn the word of God, that we might know Him and love Him, that we might learn to fear Him and carefully observe and do His word.

Vs13-19

So Moses was to write a song concerning God's goodness and His faithfulness and the people's wickedness and unfaithfulness and he was to teach it to the children of Israel as a witness against them. It was to be something like their national anthem and years down the road when God's judgment would fall upon them, as they would sing this song it was bear witness against them and strike them in their hearts that it might spur them back to repentance. And remind them of why they're in the predicament their in, because they had forsaken God.

Vs20-27

So Moses having spent time with the Lord, having received from the Lord His foreknowledge, now charges it against the people. And he tells them that after he dies it's just going to be a matter of time and they'll play the harlot and go after foreign gods and the True and living God will forsake them. And that's exactly what happened, after they went into the land, they ultimately became influenced by the pagans around them and instead of being lights in a dark world of the one true living God, they gave themselves over to idolatry. And as a result of that God's judgment came upon them and they're suffering ramifications of that even to this day.

Vs28-30

And we'll get to that (Lord willing) next week.