

December 27, 2020

Following the Lord Alone

Deuteronomy 9-13

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Dec 20	Hebrews 11-13	Dec 24	1 John 1-5
Dec 21	James 1-5	Dec 25	2 John-Jude
Dec 22	1 Peter 1-5	Dec 26	Revelation 1-3
Dec 23	2 Peter 1-3	Dec 27	Revelation 4-5

Overview of Deuteronomy 9-13

This lesson will focus on Deuteronomy 9-13; and although it is a large section of material, there is a unified message. These five chapters all carry the theme of undivided devotion to the LORD God Almighty. As we look at these chapters as a whole, certain verses from each chapter have been emphasized which give an overall message telling us to follow the Lord alone. Moses reminded the people that their conquest of the land was not about them, but about the power of God.

Lesson Idea: God calls His people to follow Him alone.

Deuteronomy 9 It's Not About You

Deuteronomy 9:1-6

1 "Hear, Israel! You are crossing the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, cities that are great and fortified to heaven, 2 a people who are great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand against the sons of Anak?' 3 So be aware today that it is the LORD your God who is crossing over ahead of you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and eliminate them quickly, just as the LORD has spoken to you.

4 "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them away from you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to take possession of this land.' Rather, it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. 5 It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you are going in to take possession of their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6 "Know, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.

Moses reminded the people that God had not chosen them because of their righteousness. He was not giving them the land, because they deserved it or earned it by their obedience and holiness. Quite the opposite—their victory would be based on two things which had almost nothing to do with them. Verse 4 indicated that God would use the conquest by Israel to punish the wickedness of the former inhabitants of Canaan. It was not about Israel, but about God's righteous wrath on the sins of the idolatrous people who resided there. Secondly, God would bring Israel safely into the land *"in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers"* (v 5). It wasn't about the Israelites' righteousness, but about God's faithfulness to Himself and His Word.

In the rest of Deuteronomy 9 (verses 7-29) Moses tells the people to remember how rebellious they were at Mt Horeb (Sinai) and all the time in the wilderness. In fact, he tells them in verse 24:

24 You have been rebellious toward the LORD since the day I knew you.

He reminds them in verses 26-29 that he had to intercede for them to keep the Lord from destroying them. But Moses also said that His intercession was not based on any righteousness of God's people, but was based on the reputation of the Lord.

26 And I prayed to the LORD and said, 'Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand! 27 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not turn Your attention to the stubbornness of this people, or to their wickedness, or their sin. 28 Otherwise, the people of the land from which You brought us will say, "Since the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them, and since He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness!" 29 Yet they are Your people, and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.'

Deuteronomy 10 Serve the LORD Your God

In Deuteronomy 10 Moses reminds the people of how the tablets containing the Ten Commandments had to

be reproduced after he smashed them in anger over their rebellion. In verses 12-17 Moses reminded them of the foundational requirements of the covenant.

Deut. 10:12-17

12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. 15 Yet the LORD set His affection on your fathers, to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, you over all the other peoples, as it is this day. 16 So circumcise your heart, and do not stiffen your neck any longer. 17 For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe.

Deuteronomy 11 Take it to Heart

Deuteronomy 11 is a recapitulation of many of the themes that Moses had already addressed with the people. He begins the chapter by calling on them to love the Lord and obey His every command. He reminds them in verse 2 that their sons had not seen the wonders that they saw when God rescued them from Egypt and preserved them in the wilderness. (Remember that Moses is addressing the second generation of Israelites who would have been children when these things happened during the forty years which have passed). Again, just like in the "Shema" passage of Deuteronomy 6, Moses reminded them in verses 18-28 to teach these things to their children and to abide by them. The choice would ultimately decide if they would receive blessings or curses from the Lord.

Deuteronomy 11:18-28

18 "You shall therefore take these words of mine to heart and to soul; and you shall tie them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets on your forehead. 19 You shall also teach them to your sons, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. 20 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 so that your days and the days of your sons may be increased on the land

which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

22 For if you are careful to keep all of this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and cling to Him, 23 then the LORD will dispossess all these nations from you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 24 Every place on which the sole of your foot steps shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. 25 No one will be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will instill the dread of you and the fear of you in all the land on which you set foot, just as He has spoken to you.

26 "See, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

Deuteronomy 12 Respect for Worship and Life

In Deuteronomy 12 Moses instructed them to destroy all the places of idolatry where false gods were worshipped. He also commanded the people to worship only where and how God prescribed in His Word. People were not to do whatever was right in their own eyes, but instead, they would set up the altar in the place where God chose and only offer their sacrifices and worship there. Originally, this would be centered in the Tabernacle worship at Shiloh, but pointed in the future to the Temple at Jerusalem. It would be right for them to make vows and offerings toward the Lord (v 11), but they would have to give them according to God's guidelines not their own whims or the patterns of other religions.

Deuteronomy 12:8-14 Respect for Worship

8 "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes; 9 for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. 10 When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, 11 then it shall come about that the

place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring everything that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice vowed offerings which you will vow to the LORD. 12 And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.

13 “Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in any cultic place that you see, 14 but only in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes: there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do everything that I command you.

In Deuteronomy 12:15-27 Moses reminded the people about the proper respect for blood because it carries life within humans and animals. God prescribed in the Law both which animals were clean to consume and how to prepare them for food. God also taught them how and where they were allowed to be eaten as an act of worship. Verses 28-32 reminded them again to “be careful and listen” to all God commanded.

Deuteronomy 12:28-32 Be Careful and Listen

28 “Be careful and listen to all these words which I am commanding you, so that it may go well for you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

29 “When the LORD your God cuts off from you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and live in their land, 30 be careful that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from your presence, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?’ 31 You shall not behave this way toward the LORD your God, because every abominable act which the LORD hates, they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire for their gods.

32 “Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take anything away from it.

Notice that God would not allow them to change His Word. He told them not to add to it or take away from it. This same reminder concludes the book of Revelation:

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of

this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)

Deut. 13 Reject Idolatry and Idle Voices

1 “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let’s serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken falsely against the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to drive you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall eliminate the evil from among you.

6 “If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is like your own soul, entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you, or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), 8 you shall not consent to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. 9 Instead, you shall most certainly kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10 So you shall stone him to death, because he has attempted to drive you away from the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 11 Then all Israel will hear about it and be afraid, and will not do such a wicked thing among you again.

12 “If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to live in, anyone saying that 13 some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods’ (whom you have not known), 14 then you shall investigate, search out, and inquire thoroughly. And if it is true and the matter is certain that this abomination has been committed among you, 15 you

shall most certainly strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword. Utterly destroy it and all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. 16 **Then you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of its public square, and burn the city and all its plunder with fire as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt.** 17 **Nothing at all from what is designated for destruction is to cling to your hand, in order that the LORD may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers,** 18 **if you will listen to the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.**

God told His people through Moses to reject any voices which do not come from Him. This included those who seemed to have powerful prophecies and dreams, even if their predictions came true. Moses said that if they seek to lead people away from a total and undivided devotion to the LORD God, then they must be ignored and eradicated from the land. Verse 3 seems to indicate that God might even allow these types of people to rise up just to test the obedience and devotion of His people (**“the LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul”**).

Verses 6-11 instruct the people not to tolerate anyone who seeks to lead them away to serve other gods, even if they are a family member. He also applies the same standards towards cities which go astray. He tells the rest of the nation to investigate thoroughly, but if it is true, they must rid the nation of those who seek to mislead others. Although these commands may seem harsh, they were really for the protection of the rest of God’s people. Throughout their history, Israel would suffer because they would stray from the worship of the one True God and into destruction. Moses had already warned them in chapter 11 about the choice between blessings and curses hinges on their wholehearted devotion to the Holy One who gives life:

26 **“See, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse:** 27 **the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today;** 28 **and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.** (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

We are reminded in the New Testament that *the wages of sin is death*. Only God gives life; all other roads lead to death and destruction. As Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, ***“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”***

The New Testament continuously warns against tolerating false teachers.

Matthew 7:15-20 ESV *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

...

Matthew 24:24 ESV *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

Romans 16:17 ESV *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 ESV *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

2 Peter 2:1-3 ESV *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

1 John 4:1 ESV *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*