

Week 12

March 19 - March 25

Deuteronomy 26-34; Joshua 1-12:6; 1 Chronicles 2:7; Psalm 90

In each of these various passages there is a constant theme: Obedience. There are illustrations for us as to what obedience produces, and in turn, what disobedience produces.

There are also lessons on leadership, lessons on communication, lessons on consequences and their “ripple effect,” and lessons on the sovereignty of God.

In its entirety, it produces a week truly focusing on the impact of our choices, and describing the necessity for those choices being in-line with God's desires and instructions.

March 19th

Deuteronomy 26-29:1,. "Blessings and Curses"

The late John Vernon McGee once mentioned the difference between people who are "woefully ignorant" and those who are "willfully ignorant." There are some who do not yet know the truth, and there are others who know it but reject it.

Today's passage describes the curses for the willfully ignorant. These are the consequences for those who willfully disobey God's word.

It is similar to God telling them not to touch the hot stove, but they do anyway, and He told them exactly what they would feel. The commands are in place for their protection, physically and spiritually.

On the other side, there are blessings for obedience. "If you fully obey the LORD your God" (Dt. 28:1) in all areas (generosity, raising children, worshipping God alone, honoring parents, honesty, etc.) then you will be blessed in all areas.

To walk in the peace and favor of God is a noticeable blessing. We should also keep in mind that God's blessings for us are not limited to our lifetime on earth.

March 20th

Deuteronomy 29:2-31:29. "True to Your Promise"

In this passage are written Moses' last words. More than just words, they were challenges for the people. Moses petitioned Israel to commit to following God. He reminded them they had made a covenant with God; a contract to obey Him.

When you consider a relationship with God today, do you think of it as casual or compelling? Would you consider your actions incidental or intentional?

When we accept the salvation of God, we surrender our life to God. We surrender our will as we yield to His. We commit to Him everything we are and everything we have. It is not a passive relationship, but an active one.

God's call for obedience from His people rings as true today as it did ages ago. "The LORD your God will delight in you if you obey His voice and keep the commands and laws written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul" (Dt. 30:10).

March 21st

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:52; Psalm 90. "Songs of Obedience"

Music plays an amazing part in our life. We listen to it as we drive, as we relax at home, as we watch a movie and it plays in the background. We hum melodies as we work, and we worship through music each week.

I have found myself sitting in a restaurant singing the words to a song playing over the speaker that I have not heard in 20 years, and even then, I did not think I sang it that much those years ago. Words through song stick with us in a unique way. Often memorizing words come easier when accompanied with music. God knows the power of song.

God told Moses to write down the words to the song and teach it to the Israelites. That very day, in immediate obedience, Moses wrote the words and taught Israel the song (Dt. 31:22).

The songs of Moses were effective ways of reminding Israel of the power of God and their history with God. The songs prayerfully encourage us to walk closely with God, our Rock. And may our songs be heard by others.

March 22nd

Deuteronomy 33-34; Joshua 1-2. "Leadership Transitions"

"Moses, the man of God" (Dt. 33:1). "Moses, the servant of the LORD" (34:5). "Israel mourned 30 days for Moses" (34:8). "There has never been another prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (34:10). "The LORD sent Moses to perform all the miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh" (34:11). "It was through Moses that the LORD demonstrated his mighty power and terrifying acts" (34:12).

Joshua must have realized the enormity of the position handed over to him after the death of Moses. Perhaps at times he thought, "This is a tough act to follow."

I believe some of this is apparent as you read the first nine verses of Joshua after he has taken his new position of leadership. It is filled with words of encouragement from the LORD.

Joshua was prepared. He had been Moses' personal aide for 40 years. He was one of only two living eyewitnesses to everything surrounding the exodus from Egypt. He always had a great confidence in God's ability to accomplish what He said. And, God had appointed Joshua.

March 23rd

Joshua 3-6. "Admiring God's Handiwork"

Although I was a small child, I remember listening to a conversation my grandpa was having with a man. "It's been said," the man hypothesized, "that the depth of the Red Sea where Israel crossed was only two inches deep." Grandpa replied, "Well, praise the Lord, God could drown a whole army in two inches of water."

The miracle of Israel crossing the Jordan (ch. 3) has been explained by some as only a natural phenomenon like a mudslide. Others have said that the fall of Jericho (ch. 6) could be explained with a natural phenomenon such as an earthquake.

I believe we waste our time when we spend more time trying to explain how God precisely accomplishes His miraculous tasks, and less time being astounded at God's incredible power. We know God's plan is being carried out regardless of the manner. But what concerns me are the small hidden ways we retract some of the credit from God, somehow attributing to Him just a little less of the awe and wonderment.

March 24th

Joshua 7-9; 1 Chronicles 2:7. "Repercussions of Our Sins"

Thirty-six men died for the sin of Achan, not to mention the death of his family. Achan disobeyed, and stole plunder that had been set apart for the LORD.

In fact, his actions and the disaster he brought on Israel are recorded in the book of the Chronicles, one thousand years after it happened. Not only did the sins of Achan affect others, but it became his legacy.

I remember hearing Dr. James Cecy ask those at a large gathering to consider how many people would be affected if you chose to sin by having an adulterous affair. People started writing down some of the obvious names within their close circle, but then he stated, "When you get to 300 let me know."

How many could your sin affect? Could it even affect children not yet born? Quite possibly.

It's not just adultery or plundering from God, but cheating, lying, and any other area in which we choose not to follow God's rules. Disobeying God may damage more than we can imagine.

March 25th

Joshua 10:1-12:6. "Lessons Learned"

Joshua's list of conquests is quite impressive. But as you read the list you see they were truly God's conquests. Time and again you read of how "the LORD fought for Israel."

The land was promised for Israel, but the inhabitants chose to stay and fight. God brought judgment on the wicked and fought for His chosen. Eventually, "the land finally had rest from war" (11:23).

The primary reason things went well for Israel was because "Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all of the LORD's instructions" (11:15).

Aside from the lessons of obedience there are other things for us to recap. Often times Joshua and Israel made memorials to the LORD. We regularly need reminding of certain things. This passage reminds us of the facts that, only with God's help do we win our battles; God is our protection and refuge; God's chosen will ultimately win; God has plans for us which are for "good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

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