

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story - Lesson #27
Reviewing Israel's Renewed Covenant with God
•HANDOUT•

► This new study lesson begins with Moses setting up three cities of Refuge in the Land east of the Jordan River. Bezer, Ramoth Gilead, and Golan are designated as sanctuaries – elsewhere called Cities of Refuge. Anyone who, unintentionally and without malice aforethought kills someone, may take refuge in one of those Cities and be safe. This will be followed by Moses reviewing the Law and Israel's Covenant with God.

Q: What is significant about Moses setting up the three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan? [ref: Numbers 14:13-15]

Q: Why would Moses feel it necessary to review and restate the Law?

► Deuteronomy 5:1-6 • Moses summoned all Israel and said: “Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. It was not with our fathers that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. The LORD spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain. (At that time I stood between the LORD and you to declare to you the word of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.)

And He said: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

Q: What is significant about Moses beginning with the phrase: “Hear, O Israel...?”

Q: Why would Moses say “The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us” when it is clear that the Covenant indeed was made with the previous generation? How are we to reconcile this statement with the historical facts?

Q: How are we to understand the statement “the LORD talked with you face to face? We know that never literally happened.

For the next sixteen verses, Moses restates all Ten Commandments, One Commandment at a time. Through the remainder of Chapter 5 Moses tells the people how the First Generation responded to God at Mt. Sinai, and he concludes with this message of hope ...

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 • So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Q: What are the promises made to us if we are faithful to obey God?

In Chapter 6 Moses continues speaking about the various Commands of the Lord. Then at the midway point, Moses turns it around and begins a series of dire warnings about the danger of disobedience ...

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 • When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you--a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant--then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Q: God was giving the people a land that was filled with beautiful houses ready to move into, and land that was already prepared for planting, nor did they need to work the land to have those things – truly a land flowing with milk and honey. Why did that represent a danger to them, as God's Covenant people?

Moses gives some practical advice about avoiding the trap of falling into apostasy when living in times of prosperity that they would face in the Promised Land ...

1. Faithfully honor the LORD in everything you do.
 - Honor the Lord by serving Him with awe-filled respect
 - Never test the Lord or doubt His faithful love toward you.
 - Always seek to be obedient and do what is right in the eyes of the Lord
2. Teach your children to understand and honor the LORD.
 - It is often the children who are at greater risk of apostasy when they are raised in prosperity.
 - Often they grow up expecting the blessings that come their way without understanding that it was through repentance and a committed walk with God that led to the prosperity in the first place.
 - Therefore, it is essential to teach and warn children that the blessings given to one generation is not automatically passed down; it is only experienced through true repentance.
 - To do otherwise would cause the blessing to be a curse to the next generation.

In Chapter 7 • Moses give Israel God's Rules of Engagement: They are to completely destroy the Canaanites and their culture ...

Deuteronomy 7:1 -6 • When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations--the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you-- and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.

Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

Q: Why was God demanding such a radical treatment of the Canaanites?

Deuteronomy 7:7-9 • The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Q: Why didn't God just wipe these people out and allow Israel to go into the Land after the deed was done?

God promises abundant blessings for Israel's Obedience ...[This covers verses 12 thru 26]

► It would be very easy – even more agreeable – to try to control the Canaanites but not destroy them. Knowing how difficult this command is going to be for Israel to carry out, the LORD speaks through Moses, promising blessings for Israel's obedience. Moses warns them that the Canaanites will be a snare to them if they have pity on them. But they will know the abundant mercy of the Lord if they are obedient. They will be blessed above all people, sickness will be removed from among them, and there will be no barren wombs, either in the animals or people.

Instead of fearing the mighty Canaanites, they need to have confidence in God's strength. Moses reminds them that “the great and awesome Lord was among them [V. 21]. Furthermore, God will go before Israel and He will fight for them. The whole process of taking the Land will be by little by little.

Israel must not stop before all the Canaanite idols and places of worship have been destroyed. This included every part of the images, or places -- including the silver and gold used to make and decorate them. These things were to be destroyed because it was detestable to the Lord and therefore must be treated as detestable by the Israelites.

Q: What foundational truth is established by these promises of blessing and warnings?

Q: Historically, how well did Israel follow these commands and warnings?

► This moves us to Chapter 8 where Moses warns Israel against Pride. He explains to Israel how God was building humility in them during their wilderness wanderings. This is where we will pick up the story next time.



Next Time • Lesson #28
“Humility & Pride”

