

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story

Lesson #28 - "Humility & Pride"

•HANDOUT•

► This lesson begins with Chapter 8 of Deuteronomy and God's warning to Israel that their greatest enemy was their pride. The scripture gives a new perspective regarding the years of wilderness wanderings: Of course they were sentenced to wander in the desert for 40 years because of the first generation's disobedience, but during those stressful years, God was also establishing, in the younger generation, the attributes they would need as they prepared to enter the Land of Promise.

Deuteronomy 8:1-5 •Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

Q: What does this passage teach us about God's discipline?

Q: What is the single most important thing that a Believer is to do?

Q: Where else in scripture do we encounter this most important principle?

The following narrative covers the remainder of Chapter 8

► Moses begins to describe the Land the LORD is giving them in detail. He speaks of the fertile land, the flowing springs of water, and the availability of minerals like copper in the hills. Moses warns them, again, not to forget the LORD and His commandments, because there will be a great temptation waiting for them to do just that.

"...when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Moses reminded them how the LORD led them thru the dreadful desert, gave the water from the rock, protected them from snakes and scorpions and fed them manna, the divine food from heaven. He warned them: "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Q: When are true Believers more at the most at risk spiritually: in a crisis or in times of prosperity and great abundance?

Moses concludes this chapter with chilling words:

Deuteronomy 8:19-20 • If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you, today, that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

Q: What is ironic about this warning?

In Deuteronomy 9, Moses once again cries out: Hear, O Israel! This time to describe what Israel will be facing in the battles ahead.

► Moses begins by telling them they are going to dispose nations who are greater and mightier than they are. The cities are great and fortified and the people are of great stature. It is a battle that is too big for Israel, but not too big for the LORD.

Moses continues: "Israel, you will be successful because it the the LORD your God who will go before you as a consuming fire and He will destroy them. But be careful Israel. Do not think in your heart that these victories are because of your righteousness. It is because of the wickedness of the people that the Lord is driving them out from before you. It is because He is fulfilling the Covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Don't ever think it is because of your righteousness, because you are a stiff-necked people."

Q: Is this still a problem in the Church today? Do we ever think that it is our righteous acts, at least partly, that is responsible for our restored relationship with God? Are we still a stiff-necked people or have we learned true humility?

Moses recounts the rebellion that occurred at Mt. Sinai to the Assembly of Israel.

► Moses' account is quite detailed in some aspects and quite spotty in other ways; sequentially it jumps around a bit. This narrative follows the main statements of Moses' dialogue, but also fills in a few small details from the Numbers account, for clarity:

► Moses tells them how he went up to the mountain top and stayed 40 days and forty night without food or water. How the Lord wrote with His finger on the Stone Tablet of ten commandments and gave it to Moses along with the tablets of the Covenant. He related how the Lord told Moses to go down to Israel's camp because they had made a molded image of a Golden Calf and were worshiping it. He explained how angry the Lord was over it. He also explained how afraid he was when he broke the Tablets of Stone after he arrived in camp and saw what Israel was doing. He described how he broke and ground Calf into fine powder and poured the powder into the water which the people drank.

► He told the people how he prayed for Aaron so the Lord wouldn't destroy him for his part in the making of the Golden Calf. He spoke of how he prayed for the Lord to have mercy on the people and not destroy them, asking God to remember the Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Moses reminded the people that it wasn't just at Mt, Sinai where the people rebelled. He named the various other place where Israel had provoked the Lord to wrath. But it was at Kadesh Barnea where they rebelled against going into the Land. [Which of course is why Israel was sent wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, until all who were 20 and older had died.]

Q: We determined in a prior lesson that it was necessary for Moses to restate the Law to this Second Generation but now Moses is starting to repeat himself. Is that really necessary?

Chapter 10 opens with Moses explaining to the people that, in spite of the great rebellion at Mt. Sinai over the Golden Calf, God has a Plan for Israel's Recovery which He has revealed to Moses.

► Israel would not be able to recover from their rebellion without God's Law. Thus the Lord told Moses to bring two tablets of stone, like the first ones, and God would write on them as he had written on the first tablets. These are the tablets God commanded Moses to place inside the Ark of the Covenant.

Moses next spoke of Aaron's death and how Eleazar, his son, ministered as priest in his place, thus establishing in the people's mind's the enduring Aaronic priesthood. He also spoke about the Levites and how they would not receive a portion or inheritance, as would the other tribes, because the LORD was their inheritance. Moses also related how the Lord told Moses to begin the journey toward the Promised Land, so they could possess it.

Surprisingly, this is where Moses stops recalling the past. He does not rehash the rebellion that led to the 40 year sentence and the death of the first generation. Instead, Moses asks them a question:

•Deuteronomy 10:12-22 • And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

•To the LORD, your God, belongs the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the LORD set His affection on your forefathers and loved them, and He chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today.

•Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the LORD, your God, is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

•He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.

•Fear the LORD your God and serve Him. Hold fast to Him and take your oaths in His Name. He is your praise; He is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.

•Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Q: What are the five answers Moses gives to the question: "What does the LORD your God ask of you?"

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Q: For what purpose does the LORD ask this of Israel?

Q: What does Moses declare about the LORD God in this passage?

Q: How should Israel respond to the LORD God?

Q: What does it mean to have a circumcised heart? [ref: Jeremiah 4:4; Leviticus 26:41; Ezekiel 44:7, 9]

Q: How is the majesty of the Lord portrayed in this passage?

Q: Who are the “alien” to which this scripture refers?

Q: Why does Moses remind Israel to show love to the aliens?

Q: Moses gives Israel a final challenge to do what?

Q: On what authority did Moses base this challenge?

► After challenging Israel to be obedient Moses speaks about the ways God has already blessed them and the future rewards for their obedience which are waiting for them in the Land of Promise. This will take us to Deuteronomy 11 which is where we pick up the story next time.



Next Time • Lesson #29
“The Promise of Blessing ”

