

**Key Passage: Deuteronomy 10:12-13**

**Key Thought: God reminds a new generation of His faithful love, His covenant, and His promises.**

**The story:**

A whole generation has come and gone—and the people who crossed the Red Sea with Moses have nearly all died. A new generation of wandering Israelites now stand just across the Jordan River, awaiting the opportunity to move into the Promised Land. Moses will not be going with them, for God said he could not go on account of his sin (Numbers 20:12). Indeed, the leader bears the same consequences that belong to an entire generation that put fear over faith. [Do you see part of the gospel story at work here as well – that one man would bear consequences that apply to all the people? Or that Moses (who represents the Law) can't bring people into God's rest; it can only come through Joshua—who's Greek name is Jesus?]

But Moses reminds this generation of the law given to their fathers. He repeats much of what we already read in Exodus, but he also expounds and explains—with some nuance, and some further pronouncements. There are blessings and there are curses, to be sure. But the end result is that God's people are to be reminded of what they were rescued *for*—because God will keep his promise, the one He gave long before He even

rescued them *from* Egypt. God told Abraham that He would lead His people into the Promised Land (Genesis 17:1-8).

### **1. What Do We Learn About God & His Spirit (that tells the gospel)?**

All “law” should be seen as a story about God. Notice that any question about the law should begin with a statement about God and his faithful love (Deut 6:20-24).

Love for God comes first (1<sup>st</sup> 4 commandments). Get that right, then our relationship with our fellow man follows (last 6 commandments). See Deut 5:6-21.

Moses thinks the wilderness wandering was an opportunity to see the amazing grace of God (Deut 8:2-5)!

Obedying laws means reflecting God. Doing what God says is a way of being like him (Matt 5:44-45). Israel was to emulate what God has done for them (Deut 10:19; 15:13-15), and to reflect the character of God (Deut 10:14, 17-18).

### **2. What Do We Learn About Christ (that tells the gospel)?**

The story is gospel because Jesus Christ lived the obedient life and fulfilled the law (Matt 5:17; 27:45-54). The law was given for our good (Rom 7:10-12), but while the law is holy, righteous, and good, we are not. So we needed a perfect Savior and a perfect sacrifice. Jesus secured the divine blessings of the covenant (Deut 28:1-14) by taking upon himself the punishment that comes from the divine judgment when we disobey the covenant (Deut 28:15-68).

Compare the language of Matthew 5:48 “you shall be perfect” with Leviticus and Deuteronomy “you shall be holy.”

### **3. What Do We Learn About Faith, Forgiveness & Hope (that tells the gospel)?**

God’s law anticipates the future failings of Israel! Here is the pattern: sin—judgment—grace—restoration. Deuteronomy 30 could be summarized this way:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Old Testament In Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction To A Vast Topic* (IVP Academic, 2019), pp. 68-69.

God reminds Israel: He redeemed them and made them His covenant people. God has given them a law to bless them. They have committed to keeping it. However, God knows Israel will not keep this law. They will fail. The story is retold in every generation.

Thus, God will have to keep his word and He will bring the curses of this covenant that Israel will incur because of their unfaithfulness.

Through others, God will bring judgment, and they will be forced out of their land and scattered among the nations.

But, judgment does not have to be God's final word or Israel's final condition. There can be hope beyond judgment. And God will enable them to seek his grace, and to love him with all their heart. So—turn back to God. Choose life, not death. His grace continues to be present.

Note that Paul sees this pattern and says the problem was human flesh (Rom 8:3). The law exposed our sinfulness. It showed us that we need something more—not a great law, but a perfect savior.

#### **4. What Do We Learn About Being the People of God (that tells the gospel)?**

Deuteronomy tells us that God envisions a people who live in loving obedience to their God (the King) and that this will serve as a model to the nations. It will be a witness to the other nations, and it will make others speak highly of God's people (Deut 4:5-8).

Now we have a perfect Spirit who lives within us so that through us the goal of the law—loving God and loving neighbors—can be fulfilled (Rom 8:4).<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, we are now released from the law (of Moses) so that we can be free to live according to the law of the Spirit of Life (Rom 7:6; 8:1-3).

#### **5. Hook Questions:<sup>3</sup>**

1. What drives your relationship with God, fear or gratitude? Do you want to know your Creator better, or are you just trying to avoid his anger?

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Williams, *How to Read the Bible Through the Jesus Lens* (Zondervan, 2012), pp. 29-31.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Williams, *How to Read the Bible through the Jesus Lens* (Zondervan, 2012), p.32.

2. Do you view God's instructions as restrictive or freeing? How does your view of God affect your answer to the question? Who would know best how a human being should live in order to experience life most fully?

3. Whose effort secures your relationship with God? Where does the Spirit of Christ dwell?