

DEUTERONOMY

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 32 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now keep in mind that for the last month of his life Moses has been instructing the children of Israel on what they were to do when they entered the Promise Land – that covers the book of Deuteronomy except for the 30 days of mourning after the death of Moses.

Last week, in Deuteronomy 31:19-22 the Lord told Moses, “**Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore to give them.’ Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.**”

In other words, this song was to remind the children of Israel why the judgment of God has come upon them, hopefully to get them to repent of their sin and get right with God or even better, don’t fall away from God, don’t go into idolatry. I guess you might call this song style, ***THE BLUES!***

As you read through the Scriptures you will find three songs that Moses wrote. The first one is a song of praise unto God for delivering them from their bondage in Egypt, for destroying Pharaoh and the Egyptian army who were coming after them. Just to give you a few lines from this song, **“Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying: ‘I will sing to the Lord, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war; The Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone.’”** Exodus 15:1-5. And of course, the song goes on praising God for all He has done for them!

Also, Psalm 91 was written by Moses, and probably the oldest of the Psalms, and it was written, most likely, during the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel. Of this Psalm, Martin Luther wrote: “Just as Moses acts in teaching the Law, so does he in this Psalm. For he preaches death, sin and condemnation, in order that he may alarm the proud who are secure in their sins, and that he may set before their eyes their sin and evil.” That is the thrust of this Psalm of Moses.

And again, here in Deuteronomy chapter 32 we have the third song of Moses. Now why after 31 chapters of teaching and instruction does God want Moses to write this song? Because we tend to remember songs more than we do teachings, instructions. A few weeks ago Steve started singing a song that was some 20 or 30 years old and he still knew the words like he learned them just yesterday! What was that song that Steve was singing? I think it was Y.M.C.A wasn't it? Not really but I think you too can attest to the fact that it is easy to remember words to a song and a lot harder to remember Bible verses! In fact, God's Word put to song we do sing!

Now there is another song of Moses spoken of in the Bible and that is in Revelation 15:3-4, where we are told, **“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.’”**

I feel that this song of Moses spoken of here in Revelation is the song that we read in Exodus chapter 15, the song of deliverance, which would fit in with the song of the Lamb. Others feel it is this song here in Deuteronomy chapter 32. Whatever the case, this song of Moses will be song along with the song of the Lamb that we see here in Revelation chapter 15!

Now in regards to this song here in Deuteronomy chapter 32, J. Vernon McGee had this to say in his commentary on the book of Deuteronomy. He wrote:

The Song of Moses is a great song, in fact, a magnificent song in many ways. The nation of Israel was to learn it. It was to be somewhat like their national anthem. It was a song given to them by God; every Israelite was to learn it and teach it to their children.

As I indicated before, music is a very important factor in the life of a nation. Someone has said, “Let me write the music of a nation, and I do not care who writes the laws.” In other words, the songs have more influence than do the laws! If this is true, we today are in a sad predicament. Modern music has sunk to a level that is absolutely frightening.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible, Vol. 1, p. 608

I think he makes a very good point when you look at the violent, abusive, threatening, dark music that is out there today. Obviously, thank God not all is like that, but much of it is. Much of the music today, even some of the Christian music does not draw you closer to God but pushes you away from the true and living God!

As we concluded last time, as the Lord instructed Moses to write this song, we read in Deuteronomy 31:30, “**Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended.**” With that said, let’s begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 32, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word!

DEUTERONOMY 32**VERSES 1-3**

1. If the ears of Israel fall silent to what is being sung, then all creation will be a witness of their rebellion against God. Songs even today play a big role in Israel, in their history, their deliverance, their heritage and-so-on. We might call them ballads today, but they are just songs to remember their history. And I think that the point Moses is making is that as they would sing this song they would understand it was speaking of them and the condition they were in and thus, they would repent and return to God!

VERSE 4

1. Moses is establishing who God is before he moves on to where the children of Israel were at. How they have forsaken their Father God!
2. First, our God is a Rock. That speaks of stability, strength. In Psalm 18:2-3 we read of this, **“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.”**

Also, in II Samuel chapter 22, starting in verse 1 we are told in a song of David, **“Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said: ‘The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. . . . For who is God, except the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God? God is my strength and power, And He makes my way perfect. . . . The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation!’”** II Samuel 22:1-4, 32-33,

47. Place your feet upon ***THE ROCK*** and when the foundations of this world begin to shake, and I think they have started, you will not be moved!

3. Not only is our God a Rock, a stable force in our lives, but His ways are perfect, He is just in His actions, He is truthful and righteous. In II Samuel 22:31 we are told, **“As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.”** It truly amazes me the number of people who refuse to put their trust in God who is good, who is faithful, righteous, just and-so-on, and instead place their trust in man, who is not! In Psalm 146:3 the Psalmist makes this very point of who we are not to put our trust in. He tells us, **“Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.”** Folks, the Lord reminds us very clearly that, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** John 14:6.

May we not forget that because the reality is, who are you going to believe?

VERSES 5-6

1. In Italy we would say, “What’s a matter you?” Moses is telling them to look at all God has done for them and yet they have turned away from Him. How foolish, how unwise and yet, we too can easily turn away from God. Now, in a few minutes we will see one of the primary reasons people do turn away from God. But first, Moses is going to recap for them what God has done for them, for the children of Israel, His children and His nation that He birthed, He brought to life!

VERSES 7-14

1. Moses wants them to remember God’s love for them. How He would bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. How he was the One leading them on their journey and when it got tough, He carried them along, encouraging them and helping them to fly, to soar as they spread their wings knowing that God was under them!

2. Now please understand that Moses did not want to lay some big guilt trip on them, but as they sang this song conviction would grow in their lives and they would return to the Lord. Restoration is the idea, not destruction, but many times people will have to be brought low before they will look up!

3. Now you may wonder how can a people who are so blessed by God turn away from God and the answer is simple. Let’s read on and see what Moses says is the reason for their backsliding.

VERSES 15-18

1. After reading of how Israel turned from God, rebelled against Him, the Lord still calls them Jeshurun, why? First of all, Jeshurun means “the upright one.” We just read that this is not the case and thus, why does God do that? Because God is looking at them in a positional sense and not the practical sense of where they are at on a daily basis. He sees them as they will be, that one-day all Israel will be saved as Paul tells us in Romans. God does the same with us as Christians. Because of the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all our sins, God sees us positionally as perfect, as white as snow even though in a practical sense we still do sin! He sees the finished product as the work He has begun in us He will compete!

2. Now here is the reason they fell away from God – ***PROSPERITY!*** You see, when things are going well you really don’t need God, at least that is what many think. You have everything you need. You have your two camel garage. Your four wheel or leg transportation with a sunroof and I guess it is all open, and-so-on. Israel was very blessed and they turned from God, thought they did not need Him any longer and thus, in their prosperity they turned away from the true and living God and turned to idols, demons! I like the words of Agur in Proverbs 30:7-9, **“Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches — Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.”** In other words, “Lord, give me just what I need, not too much or too little so I don’t turn from you.” Wise words.

3. And isn't it interesting what people turn to when they turn away from the true and living God! They turn to idols, false gods, really demons who can't do anything for them, anything that will bless them, be good for them. Demons will kill and destroy people's lives because their master, Satan does that! In Jeremiah 2:13 God warned His people, **“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water.”**

In other words, these false doctrines, these false religious teachings, these false religious systems can't hold water, they are empty, they are full of holes. While God's truths, His Word is pure, it is living, it is powerful, it is life giving and life sustaining. You see, the philosophies of this world are truly empty, the world's religions are empty, and yet when you turn away from the true and living God this is what you are left with and this is where you will gravitate towards! And folks, we see this in the church today, a drift away from the truths of God found in the Word of God and a move towards a false spirituality, New Age teachings and-so-on. I will give you just one example but sadly, the church is hewing out for themselves all kinds of broken cisterns that can't hold water because in their efforts to draw close to God, they are moving away from Him!

For all of you who think that Paul Young's book, *The Shack* is a wonderful Christian book, shame on you! This book is still on the top of the New York Times Best Seller List, and heralded as one of the best Christian books ever. Folks, this book is full of blasphemy about God, it is full of false doctrine, and it is garbage. And listen now to the theology that the author ascribes to as well as a few more so-called Christians who others are gravitating to and buying into their false doctrine. We are told:

In a recent radio interview, *The Shack* author, Paul Young, told the interviewer he did not hold to the traditional view of the atonement in that he does not believe Jesus Christ bore the punishment (i.e., penalty) for man's sins when He died on the Cross.

He also stated, with regard to this topic: "I don't know if you're aware, but that's a huge debate that's going on in theology right now within the evangelical community." That debate, to which Young refers, is the new theology (or as we call it the new spirituality) that is entering Christianity through contemplative and emerging figures such as Brennan Manning, Brian McLaren, and Marcus Borg.

This "huge debate" states that a loving Father would never send His Son to a violent death on behalf of the sins of others. And while they do not deny that Jesus did physically die on a Cross, they insist that His death was not to be a substitutionary act wherein He was punished for our sins. Rather, they say, He was killed by man, not for man. And he was a perfect model of sacrificial servanthood. As Episcopal new spirituality author, Alan Jones, states, "Jesus' sacrifice was to appease an angry God. Penal substitution was the name of this vile doctrine" (*Reimagining Christianity*, p. 168).

Contemplative proponent Brennan Manning, quoting Catholic mystic William Shannon, says: “[T]he god who exacts the last drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased . . . does not exist” (*Above All*, pp. 58-59). Mystic Marcus Borg has this exact same view. He opposes the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement and sees the Cross as merely a metaphor for transformation in the mystical sense. Brian McLaren shares this view (and indeed resonates with Borg) when he says that hell and the Cross are “false advertising for God.”

- <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com>, The Shack
Author Denies Biblical Substitutionary Atonement

Folks, we need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us because the Church, in her prosperity, is turning away from God as we just saw with our example and that is just one small example. Apart from the cross, apart from the atonement, we are still dead in our sins and now they want to take away the work that Jesus has done for us because of His love for us and they are sending people to Hell in a basket or should I say casket!

VERSES 19-27

1. Okay, not an upbeat song but definitely the Blues! God is saying that every area of their life will be affected as He removes His hand from them. And judgment did come by the hands of the Babylonians, an even more wicked nation than they were! But I think there is a veiled reference to the Church here. As the Jews turned their backs to Jesus God is now dealing with the Gentiles and in doing so He is making Israel jealous because the Gentiles are being blessed with the hope that it would cause the Jews to return to Him and one day they will!

Paul, in Romans 11:11-15 makes this point as he wrote, **“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”** Again, the idea of this judgment is for restoration!

VERSES 28-29

1. Here is a great deterrent to backsliding, knowing what the end of it will be like! God will let us run and it is amazing how far, how low, how destructive our running can be. But the reality is that His arms are always open to us and all we need to do is turn and run back into His arms! That is the love of God for us, He wants what is best but He will not force us, He will let us run, but don't! It truly is not worth it and there truly are consequences to our actions!

VERSES 30-35

1. When God let's go, look out! You see, once we could drive out the enemies in our lives, not by our strength, but by His working in us and through us. Now the enemies of our lives are overtaking us because we are fighting them in the flesh and not with the power of God. We thought we could do it on our own, and we have failed. And yes, the Bible does say that if God is for us who could be against us, and the reality there is no one who can be against us except one – *US!* You see, we can remove ourselves from the blessings of God by walking away and the only solution is to return to Him! And yes, as God is speaking to the children of Israel through Moses in this song, He is speaking of the physical enemies that God will drive out even if the children of Israel are outnumbered if they are walking with Him. If they are not, just a few will cause the children of Israel to flee!

2. Deuteronomy 32:35 is the text that Jonathan Edwards used for his now famous sermon, *SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD*, that was delivered on July 8, 1711 in Enfield, Connecticut. You see, men had fallen away from God and God used Jonathan Edwards and others during this period of time knowing as The Great Awakening to call the nation to repentance, to return to God. Listen to a portion of this famous sermon. We are told as he is speaking to sinners:

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder, and you have not interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

- Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God*, pp. 11-12

I guess Jonathan Edwards did not understand the concept of a Seeker Friendly Church, or maybe he did and realized they needed to hear the truths of God found in the Word of God. They did not need to have their ears tickled. You see, as he was reading this sermon, which he had to hold the notes close to his face because his eyesight was so bad, he spoke in a monotone voice, and yet, people were crying out to God during the service, falling on their knees and asking God to forgive them, they turned to God, to Jesus because they saw the reality of where they were going! May pastors today not only teach God's Word but by the power of God's Spirit bring it to the people and I know that lives will be transformed! Isaiah 55:11 tells us, **“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”** And I believe that!

VERSES 36-43

1. In other words, when you come to the end of yourself, when all your strength, all your resources are gone, when you can't do it on your own any longer, then try calling out to those god's you were serving and see if they can help! Now God is not being mean here, He just wants them to see what they were holding onto can't hold any water so that when they turn back to Him, they will stay because they have already tasted and seen the emptiness of what they were holding on to! You see, there are no other god's, there is no God like **YAHWEH!** He is God; all the other so-called god's are demons, fallen angels, creative beings! Thus, don't be foolish, you have no strength, return to the Lord, place your foot upon the **ROCK**, for your heavenly Father loves you!

VERSES 44-47

1. Moses shared this song with the people, he wanted them to remember it to help them in their walk with God or when they do turn away from God and they are humming this song, they remember that it is speaking of them and they would return to the true and living God!

2. Now here is one of those great and sad lies that the Devil likes to tell us. It has been spoken throughout time and it is just this simple and yet powerful: ***IT IS A FUTILE THING TO SERVE THE LORD!*** In other words, what's the use in serving God, it is still hard, it is still difficult! Folks, it is not a futile thing to serve the Lord. Yes, there is no doubt that at times it can be very difficult and when you look at the wicked, it seems like they are doing well. Asaph had this same problem in Psalm 73; let's look at this Psalm for a minute.

Here, in Psalm 73, we see Asaph wrestle with a problem that all of us face from time to time. And what he learned from these times is something we should take with us, as we will see. Look at Psalm 73:1, "**Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart.**" Asaph starts out on solid ground, that God is good. The problem arises when we begin to add other, non-truths to that. You see, he says God is good, and then will say in verse 2, "But . . ." Big mistake!

Look at verses 2 and 3 of this Psalm, "**But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**" As Asaph took his eyes off the Lord, he focused them on the wicked, and he became envious of their prosperity. He was so envious of what they had and he didn't have, his faith in the goodness of God was almost destroyed, he began to slip because he was not standing on solid ground, upon the Rock!

Now, in verses 4-6 we are told, **“For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment.”** Now he is seeing a distorted picture here. He is saying the death of the wicked is painless. They are strong. They are not troubled. They are proud and arrogant about the good life they have. And this was just eating away at Asaph.

In verses 7-8 we are told, **“Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily.”** In other words, they have more than they need and they seem to get even more. And they are proud of the way they can oppress others to make money, they boast about it.

As we move on in verses 9-10 Asaph says, **“They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them.”** These are the ones who are respected, get on television, write books, get quoted, and-so-on but not him! Their cups are overflowing from what they have taken from others.

As we move into verse 11, he continues on by saying, **“And they say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?’”** Because of the wicked concepts of God, they feel that God doesn't know what they are doing, or He doesn't care, or that He can't do anything about it, or worse of all, that He condones their actions. Never mistake the long-suffering of God with any of these wrong conclusions. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 86:15, **“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”**

As we move, look at verses 12-14, **“Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.”** Look how far he has fallen. He is now saying that there is no real benefit in doing good, in serving God! That is the lie of the Devil that we are speaking of here in Deuteronomy. And the reality is, this is true if this world is where your treasure is at, for that is where your heart will also be. And you might as well eat, drink and be merry, because this is all there is for you. But if your treasure is in the Lord, looking towards eternity, you will not be sorry. And I will guarantee you this, all those who have died outside of Christ, if they had the chance to do it all over again, they would live for Him! But you only get one chance, and that chance is while you are living, for in death, there is no second chance.

And as Asaph fell into this major pity party he was throwing for himself, he was blowing things completely out of proportion. The wicked are not always blessed. They are not always healthy. They do die in pain like everyone else, and-so-on. And as people begin to fall into this trap, they begin to exaggerate what is really happening to them, just as Asaph was.

In verse 15 we are told, **“If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.”** As much as Asaph was trying to deal with those issues on the inside, he did not go around and stumble others by telling them God isn't good. That is important for all of us to understand. You see, as we wrestle through issues, don't go verbalizing all your doubts, because God will answer those things, and if you spoke these lies to others, you will cause them to stumble over an issue that was not really an issue.

And here is where Asaph was at with all this eating at him. In verse 16 we are told, **“When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me.”** This was hard to deal with for Asaph, why the wicked prospered and reconciling that with the goodness of God while he was going through some heavy trial.

How did he get out of this, how did he get a correct perspective of the situation, how do we? Let's look at verses 17-19 and you will see. **“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.”**

He couldn't see until he put his spiritual glasses on, you might say. It is when he got back into fellowship with God, into His Word, that he saw the whole picture. And as you come to church, it should also be a time where God is revealed to you more clearly through His Word. And Asaph is now saying that the wicked are not getting away with anything, for in the end God will judge them. You see, he is looking at life through the eyes of eternity. Don't become near-sighted. Look at the whole picture. And thus, it is not a futile thing to serve the Lord!

VERSES 48-52

1. Because Moses did not represent the Lord correctly, he would not be allowed to enter into the Promise Land, but God would allow Him to see all that the children of Israel will inherit under the leadership of Joshua. At the age of 120 Moses will climb up this 4500-foot mountain, not an easy climb for a 120 year old, and there he will die.

2. Folks, let me leave you with this. God's Word is living and it is powerful and it is able to change people's lives if we allow it. Remember what Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 3:16, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**" God's Word is profitable for telling us what is right. God's Word is profitable for telling us what is wrong. God's Word is profitable for telling us how to get right when we have gone astray. And God's Word is profitable for telling us how to stay right. And if we allow it, Paul says this is what will happen in your life, "**that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" II Timothy 3:17. You see, as you read and apply God's Word to your life you will be complete! May we believe it and apply it to our lives so that we may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!