



Lesson 3: Work at Remembering

Deuteronomy 4:1-20, 23-31; 9:7-8, 22-24

Lesson Summary and Objectives

Summary

Moses reminds the people of some particular mistakes of the past in hopes that they won't repeat them in the future.

Learning Outcomes

- Participants can explain the covenant between God and his people.
- Participants can explain the relationship between love/faitth/obedience.
- Participants can describe the proper role of the past in determining our choices for the future.
- Participants can identify with the ancient Israelites and the issues they faced.
- Participants can evaluate the importance of individual vs. communal responsibility to God.

Teaching Outline

Invite

- What is your earliest memory? Does it affect your life now in any way?

Inform

Moses is continuing his sermon that we looked at last week. Many of the themes continue throughout the sermon, include the need to remember the past so that the future can be better.

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-20, 23-31

- Moses reminds them to follow the commands exactly so that their journey in the new land can be successful (1-2).
- Moses reminds them of the incident at Baal Peor, where Israelite men committed sexual immorality with Moabite women and sacrificed to their gods (3-4; cf Num 25).
- Again, Moses reminds them to follow the laws (5).
- This time, however, Moses tells them that their obedience will be an evangelistic proclamation to other nations. These nations will hear about God's laws and determine that Israel is wise and understanding because of their God who gives these kinds of good laws (6-8).
- Moses explicitly tells them not to forget what they have seen. (9a).
 - Not only must his current hearers remember, but they must tell their children so that they will not forget (9b).

- Moses reminds them of when they first received the Ten Commandments and how God expected faithful obedience from that point on (10-14).
- Though God gave ten commandments, Moses focuses especially on the commandment against idols (15-20).
- Skipping to v. 23, we find another explicit command not to forget – specifically, don't make an idol (23).
- Why? Because God is jealous and a consuming fire (24).
- Moses uses all this to warn the people against making idols in the new land. God will destroy them if they do so (25-28)
- He urges them to follow a better path: Seek God with all their heart (29).
- Moses seems to predict their future disobedience and God's future forgiveness and faithfulness to his covenant (30-31).

Read Deuteronomy 9:7-8, 22-24

- Moses urges them to *remember* that they are stubborn ("stiff-necked", v. 6) and *never forget* how they made God mad in the wilderness (7a).
- Moses pronounces a very stark verdict: "From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the Lord" (7b).
- Moses tells the story of their idol-worshipping rebellion at Horeb again (8).
- Later on, he notes other places (Taberah [cf Num 11], Massah [cf Exod 17], and Kibroth [cf Num 11]) where they angered God (22).
- Moses notes their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (23, cf Deut 1).
- Again, Moses pronounces a harsh verdict: "You have been rebellious against the Lord ever since I have known you" (24).

Investigate

- Look back through today's readings. What seem to be the main issues Israel struggled with in the past?
- Why might remembering those past incidents help Israel in the future?
- Does it seem like Moses is working himself up to get angrier and angrier as he goes? Note the move from specific incidents to the generalizing verdict: you've *always* been rebellious (9:24).
- Look at the specific mentions of the phrase "do not forget"/"never forget" (4:9, 23, 31; 9:7). What is Moses telling them not to forget? Do you notice any themes?
- Look at the original accounts of the incidents mentioned in 9:22. What do you notice about those?
- By saying "do not forget," is Moses just wanting them to be able to recall the details of the events in question? Or does he have something else/more in mind?

Illustrate

- How are today's Christians guilty of selective amnesia (i.e., conveniently forgetting portions of the past)?
- Moses' main concern seems to be idolatry. How might we bring that issue into our world and make it more applicable?
- What mistakes do Christians seem to keep making?

- What things do we do now to help us remember the past? What things do we need to *start doing* in order to help us remember the past?

New Testament Ties

Read 1 Cor 6:9-11; Eph 2:11-13

- What were the Christians mentioned in these verses in the past? *How* are they now different? *Why* are they different?
- Describe the role Jesus plays in making our future different from our past.

Inspire

Ideas for closing:

- Pray a prayer of repentance for our repeated disobedience.
- Read one of the seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, or 143).

For next week, read Deut 5, focusing on verses 1-15. Consider how these commandments teach us to love God.