

**The Weekly Word**  
October 19-25, 2020

October is streaking by and so is our daily reading of the Bible is on the move. Happy reading as we read Moses' last words to the people before they entered the Promised Land...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, October 19: Deuteronomy 2– The Lord keeper of promises...**

In my many readings of Deuteronomy and the Old Testament over the years I don't recall making the connection I saw this morning.

God keeps His promises. I absolutely believe that. Over and over I see that playing out in the life of God's people of the Old and New Testaments. Then today I noticed how the Lord kept His promises to Esau and Lot who are part of the Old Testament story but not of the blessed lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

*Then the LORD said to me, "You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north. Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your relatives the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own. You are to pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink' "* (2-6)

Even though Esau, the son Isaac and brother of Jacob, was not the son of promise through whom God would build His people. Still God kept His word to Esau to bless and watch over him and his heirs. And Israel, now about to enter their Promised Land, was not to take any property or wealth from the descendants of Esau in Seir. Israel must pay for any provisions they use in Seir.

Beyond this, we learn that God drove out the inhabitants in the land of Seir before Esau's descendants. And God did the same for the descendants of Lot, Abram's nephew, who came with Abram when he first heard and followed God's call as the first patriarch of Israel.

*Now when the last of these fighting men among the people had died, the LORD said to me, "Today you are to pass by the region of Moab at Ar. When you come to the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them to war, for I will not give you possession of any land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot." (That, too, was considered a land of the Rephaites, who used to live there... They were a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. **The LORD destroyed them from before the Ammonites, who drove them out and settled in their place. The LORD had done the same for the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them. They drove them out and have lived in their place to this day** (16-22 bold mine).*

In keeping His promises to Lot and Esau, God led their descendants into lands God set a part for them. I never realized this before today.

Thinking about this reinforces my trust and dependence upon the Lord. If God keeps His promises and watches over these bit players who were not even in the lineage of Abrahamic blessing, how much more will the Lord watch over me and His children of promise?

Additionally, this reinforces for me that the Lord is trustworthy. I can rest my life in His hands. And as He leads me He will clear the way for me to accomplish all that He leads and directs.

*Lord, realizing Your care for Esau and Lot strengthens my trust in You. You are a keeper of Your Word. I will follow You all of my days... Through Jesus I pray. Amen.*

### **Tuesday, October 20: Deuteronomy 3– Sin has consequences...**

Sin has its consequences. For 40 years Moses led Israel from bondage to freedom. But because one time an exasperated Moses in a moment of frustration took credit reserved for the Lord, God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land. Despite begging God to change His mind, God never relented.

*At that time I pleaded with the LORD: “Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do? Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan—that fine hill country and Lebanon.”*

*But because of you the LORD was angry with me and would not listen to me. “That is enough,” the LORD said. “Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. Go up to the top of Pisgah and look west and north and south and east. Look at the land with your own eyes, since you are not going to cross this Jordan (23-27).*

To my ears Moses didn't seem to take full responsibility for his sin. Yes, Israel exasperated him. Yes, they were stubborn and wore on him. But still it was Moses who struck the rock in anger. Listening to Moses it seemed he still carried some resentment against the people. *But because of you the LORD was angry with me...* it seemed that Moses blamed the people for his error.

I may be making too much of this. Why would it surprise me that Moses was human just like me (us). I know I am far too prone to blame others, particularly at first, rather than face my own failings.

No matter what was going on inside of Moses, the Lord stood fast and would not let Moses enter the Promised Land. However, God did allow Moses to climb a mountain with a good view of the Land, but Moses never set foot upon it.

Sin has consequences and for Moses it meant not entering the Promised Land.

I know God lavishes His grace upon me (and us), still sin has consequences. If I steal, I may go to prison. God would forgive, but I would still have to do my time. An affair may mean the end of a marriage. Lying might mean the end of friendships. God forgives, as I believe God forgave Moses, but sin had consequences... Sometimes God mitigates the consequences, but don't ever presume on that.

*Lord, I pray for maturity to accept when I am wrong. I ask for Your aid to learn from my sin and shortcomings, to accept responsibility and to grow ever more mature in You. Thank You for the gift of forgiveness. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, October 21: Deuteronomy 4– Keep God's decrees...**

There is only one God, the Lord God Almighty... the God of the Hebrews, the God of the Bible.

*Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time (39-40).*

God leaves no wiggle room. The Lord is the only God, period, end of discussion. God alone made the heavens and the earth. God made everything else in the world. There was God and then God created the world. Everything we see, know, learn, use, and discover was created by God.

So where does this leave us as people, a part of God's creation?

We are to keep God's decrees and commands and we are to pass these along to the ensuing generations.

Our job, my job... keep God's truths and pass them along.

At this point the sin that erupted in the garden with Adam and Eve, the sin of wanting to be god myself, percolates through. BUT... I want to say. Unfortunately, there are not 'buts' like this with the Lord. God sets the rules. I follow.

The Lord uses this passage to remind me I am His. God calls the shots. I trust. I obey and I pass along all God has told me...

*Lord, someday I need to be reminded of my place in the cosmos. I am creation. I am a speck. A speck who is loved by You. I do not deserve this and I am blessed by Your love and mercy. Show me Your ways, Oh Lord, and grant me a willing spirit to follow and obey You. Through Jesus, my Lord, I pray. Amen.*

#### **Thursday, October 22: Deuteronomy 5– God has no grandchildren...**

In this chapter the people of Israel stand poised to enter the Promised Land. 40 years they have wandered in the desert as the generation of fighting men died off, a punishment for their refusal to go in and take the Land when God directed.

Now in his final charge to Israel Moses sets the record straight reminding them of all God did during those 40 years. In this chapter Moses recounts the giving of the 10 Commandments. I was struck by his direct words to the people standing before him and the ever-present nature of God's law and covenant.

*Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, 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 ancestors 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 (1-4, bold mine).*

There are men and women standing before Moses that day who were not yet alive when Israel camped at the base of Mt Horeb and still the covenant was made with them ('us' Moses says).

My mind connects this with God's name, I AM; Our God, the ever present one!

I also thought about the 'often used' phrase, God has no grandchildren... only children.

Back to the text...I love that the covenant with God is always in the present. God's covenant is with me (us), not merely with people of the past.

God is here with me. And even though God's Word is ancient; God's Word spoken is spoken to me... I am touched by the present-ness of the Lord.

*Lord, I am blessed by the immediacy of Your presence and Your Covenant... I am blessed by You, my Lord. Blessed by You. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.*

#### **Friday, October 23: Deuteronomy 6– Don't forget the Lord...**

Reading this chapter I initially thought that I would meditate on verses 4-8, the great statement on God. Then as I kept reading I was drawn to the next set of verses, 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.*

My initial thought was about the dangers of affluence.

The Lord warned Israel that when he brings them into the Promised Land and they receive so many good things they didn't labor for themselves and when they are satisfied, be careful you do not forget the Lord. When life is easy our need for the Lord diminishes.

I look around my –middle, upper-middle, lower-upper –class world, I see how true God's statement is. First, I observe how a very comfortable life almost stamps out any need for God. Financially secure people can depend on their own resources and don't need God. It seems much harder to share faith with affluent people. When you project an air that you don't need, then you don't need God. Plus, affluence often means you have many toys and distractions so 'gathering together' with others for worship and study often doesn't fit your busy lifestyle.

While all of this is an impediment for people not yet in the faith, Moses' words were to people of faith. And here, too, his warning is valid and timeless. Even for people of faith an easy life remains a trap. 'Look at all I provided' can become my implicit if not explicit thinking. This, of course, misses the entire fact that God provided it all for me. And without God's grace I would not be able to provide all this for myself. Having all the toys can also be a distraction for me from worship, service and piety. I have so many good things to do, things of God can be bumped off my to do list.

Fortunately, this need not be. I can heed God's warning and press into my faith in the Lord. I can seek to use my resources for God's kingdom advance. I can say 'no' to self-indulgence and continue to grow in piety. This is my call from these verses today...

*Lord God, thank You for this warning. Give me eyes to see where I need to apply Your warning to my life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Saturday, October 24: Deuteronomy 7– God has a plan...**

Poised to enter the Promised Land, Moses bolsters the faith of the people. He calls them to faithfulness even as he reminds them God is on their side and God has a plan.

I see in verses 21-23 the wisdom of God. *Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God. The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you. But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed (21-23).*

The Promised Land is a huge tract of land for the Israelites to inhabit. There are peoples to conquer, lands to cultivate, houses and cities to build. The building of the country of Israel is an enormous endeavor, which will take time and sustained effort.

God says, "I am with you and I will be with you all the way to the end." ... *Your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little.* I receive such encouragement by those final 3 words, little by little. It will take time and I am with you. What a relief it must have been to realize that they didn't have to accomplish everything all at once. And what's more, God has a reason for this little by little strategy. *You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you.* The Hebrews were not yet numerous enough to populate and cultivate the entire land God is giving to them. If all the inhabitants were cleared out in one fell swoop then great swaths of the land would lay fallow allowing wild animals to

increase creating yet another threat to their existence. Taking over the land little by little allows the land to remain cultivated and keep predators at bay.

Yes, God has a plan.

God always has a plan. He has a plan for our lives and the advance of His name around the globe. Little by little the name of Jesus is being spread, one conversation, one act of service, one missionary sent out at a time.

*Lord, what is my little by little task for today? Is there a conversation You want me to have, an act of love You want me to do, a project for Your name You want me to support? Lead and guide me, Lord, to be part of Your little by little advance in Your world. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **Sunday, October 25, 2020 - Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the Living Hope website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@LivingHopeCT.org](mailto:office@LivingHopeCT.org).*

Click [here](#) for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.