

Deuteronomy

Prophet Greater than Moses



As we travel Route 66, we are going to travel into the book of Deuteronomy. Moses, standing on the plain of Moab, is going to deliver his farewell message to the children of Israel. I believe Moses must have believed what we believe; history has a way of repeating itself. Have you ever noticed that? As a matter of fact, some people believe the reason we study history is because it does repeat itself, therefore, there are valuable lessons for this generation to learn from previous generations. I actually read this week where someone said: History has a way of repeating itself because they were not listening at first. History has a way of repeating because the first time, people weren't listening.

As we exit into Deuteronomy, notice how many times Moses says listen, listen; don't forget, don't forget; remember, remember, remember. Therefore, we are calling these the key words of Deuteronomy:

- **Listen**
- **Don't Forget**
- **Remember**

Why are these key words? Because Moses was 120 years of age, standing before a group of people who were all less than half his age, many of them a quarter of his age, and the question on many of their minds was haven't we been here before? They are standing at the same place their fathers and grandfathers stood forty years earlier, and some of them remember that. They scratch their heads and say haven't we been here before? Moses wants to make sure history doesn't repeat itself, so in the beginning of his message, he said look how big you have grown! He reminds them that they used to be a family of seventy, and tells them to look up in the sky and count the stars because now they are as numerous as the stars of

Heaven. In other words, Moses is telling the children of Israel that they are big enough to take the land. Then, in the opening chapters he told them not to *be* afraid of the giants. He said that the first time your fathers were here and heard of the giants in their land, their heart melted and they did not take the land, but you can defeat the giants. He reminded them they had been on this side of the river for forty years, but in the last several months, as the previous generation died out, they have been fighting the giants on this side of the Jordan. And the giants on that side of the river are no different than the giants you've been defeating on this side of the river, so you can defeat the giants. Then he said, *who has a God like you?*

I don't know about you, but I'm getting the picture that this is the Super Bowl. Haven't you always wanted to know what the winning team said to their coach before the kickoff of the first half, or the kickoff of the second half, when you see a change in the way they play? You wonder what was said. Can you imagine being the children of Israel and Moses telling you how big you are and not to be afraid of the giants?

The God of Israel

Then he reminds them who their God is. The first thing he asks them is who has a God that is near to them like your God is near to you? And the answer is nobody. Do we get how near our God actually is to us as His people? And then Moses told them to notice His laws and notice His rules and how righteous they are. Then he makes this statement, *"Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"*

You see, the book of Deuteronomy is going to be about the Lord, it's going to be about the law, it's going to be about the leaders, and it is going to be about the land. Moses isn't giving a pep talk; he is giving the very words of God, so that this generation will not be like the last generation; so that history will not repeat itself. He is reminding them of the Lord, the law, their leaders, and the land, as they get ready to take the land of Canaan.

Three Key Truths

Now before they go in, he reminds them of three key truths. Now, I believe the heart of Deuteronomy is revealed in chapters 5-10. I'm taking the key truth from these chapters, but I am not negating the rest of the book.

- **The first truth is revealed in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*"**

Because of the holiness and the uniqueness of God, and because of His special revelation to His people, He wanted them to love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might. So what should our response be to a loving God who is holy? We should love Him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our might.

- **The second key truth is this Deuteronomy 7:6-9, "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations..."**

Moses told them that God chose them, not because they are big in number, not because there was something special about them, but He chose them because He loved them. His love which caused Him to choose them was not based on anything in them, but it was based on everything in Him. Don't ever let someone tell you that the doctrine election does

not speak of the love of God! Election is rooted in God's love, and it was love that caused Him to call Israel to be His peculiar people.

And then in the ninth chapter, again Moses says, "Listen." Do you hear Moses? This is important. It is a father addressing his children. I want you to listen; I want you to remember; I don't want you to forget this last point that God says to the nation of Israel.

- **Deuteronomy 9:4-6 says, "Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people."**

Moses said that the Lord is not bringing you into the land because of your righteousness; you're a stubborn people. Now, we don't want to say amen here, we want to say whoa. Do you know what Moses was afraid of? He was afraid that when the children of Israel got into the land and took possession of the land, they might look at themselves and think wow, it's based on our righteousness that God gave us this land flowing with milk and honey! It is amazing that sometimes people get where they are and actually think they are there because of who they are and what they have done, instead of realizing it didn't have nothing to do with them. As a matter of fact, God will say that the reason He is driving the nations out and Israel is taking the land has nothing to do with Israel's righteousness, and it has everything to do with the wickedness of the other nations. God is saying I'm not going to continue to let them live on the planet, so I'm wiping them out, and as I wipe them out, you are going to come in and possess the land. Not all at once, because if you took it all at once and all

the people were gone, the animals would overtake you, so we are going to do this slowly. But as we do this slowly and we possess the land, don't you ever think it is because of your righteousness.

Can I just say this? Get over yourself! You love God because of who He is, He loves you because of who He is, and what He is doing in your life is not because of you, but because of Him! But here is the glory. Those of us who are His people get to get in on what He is in on, and that is making His name known throughout the world. He wants His people to be in a place where He wants you to be. I pray you are doing what God wants you to be doing, and see that it is ultimately not because of you, but it is because of His righteousness.

Redemptive Markers

Now this is tough. Did you know the book of Deuteronomy is quoted over ninety times in the New Testament? I started through my list of redemptive markers and I had about fifty, but I have narrowed it down to four. I am using these four is because these four redemptive markers are used in a dramatic way in the New Testament.

1. Deuteronomy 6:4-5

In the New Testament, Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was. He refers to these verses when he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind." Do you understand why God wants us to be obedient? It is because God sees obedience as a sign of your love. If you really want to show your parents how much you love them, you obey them. Why do you obey them? It is because you believe they love you and what they want for you is best, so your obedience is a sign, a mark, of love. So the greatest command is to love our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. As we walk around in Deuteronomy, do you love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind? That is what He desires.

2. Deuteronomy 18:15-19

I'm not going to read all of this, but basically, Moses said, *when we get into the land, there will be a lot of voices that are going to appear and try to lead you; don't ever listen to them. I'm going away, but God will raise up a prophet like me and God will put His words in his mouth and you are*

to listen to him. If you don't listen to him, it is going to be really, really bad. You know who fulfilled this Scripture, and because of this Scripture, the Jews began to look for a coming prophet just like Moses.

3. Deuteronomy 21:22-23

In this redemptive marker, Moses basically says that if you get yourself hung on a tree, you are going to be cursed. This is a redemptive marker because on that Friday, long ago, the One who we say got up from the grave became a curse. He was separated from God, because of you and because of me.

4. Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Our fourth redemptive mark plays prominently in the book of Romans about being saved. In verse 14, He says, *"But the word is very near you."* You see, in Deuteronomy, God is going to say, through Moses, that you have a choice. You can choose life or you can choose death. He is telling them that the choice you make, a choice of faith is this close, *"It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it."*

When the apostle Paul is pleading for the church at Rome to put their faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, he said, you are this close; you are as close as confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and you will be saved.

When you study the book of Deuteronomy, please notice those redemptive markers. Now, before we close, I've got to tell you two of my favorite thoughts in the book. I love when they read the blessings and the curses. When they go into the land on Mount Gerizim, they are going to read the blessings, and on Mount Ebal, they read the curses. In Deuteronomy 27 and 28, every time they read a curse, all the people are supposed to say amen. Get it? When God said something, when He pronounced a curse, all the people were supposed to say amen. What that means is, let this be true; God, we agree with you, we see this as You are seeing this; God, let it happen. That is why I would kind of like to hear an amen or two; it is kind of a biblical thing! Amen? Except we don't want to just amen the curses, we want to amen the blessings! Amen?

And then, my other favorite story in Deuteronomy is in chapter 24 where it is talking about family, because I love family. The book of Deuteronomy is

called Deuteronomy because of mistranslation by the translators from the Hebrew into Greek before Christ was born. You have heard of the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. They wanted a copy of every book in the famous library at Alexandria, so they wanted a copy of the Hebrew Bible in that library. So they had seventy scholars translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and when they were translating it from Hebrew into Greek, they had to put a title on the book of Deuteronomy. So they put the title Deuteronomy, a mistranslation of chapter 17, verse 18. Instead of translating that word as a repetition of the law, a reminder of the law, they actually called it the second law. So the word Deuteronomy actually means second law. But no, God didn't give Israel a second law. He just stated a second time to the next generation what He had stated to the first generation forty years earlier. In this repeating of the law, when Israel finally got into the land, God wanted them to live as His people, so all the nations would know He is holy, and He wanted them to be holy.

In Deuteronomy, chapter 24, He talks about family life, and you guys know how much I love family. My favorite verse is Deuteronomy 24:5. It says that when a man gets married, he is to be relieved of all of these duties for a year so that he can stay home and make his wife happy.

When my wife and I got married, people always got married on a Friday night. The reason you got married on a Friday night is because you had to be back to work on Monday and back to church on Sunday. So we got married on a Friday night. We had a honeymoon and we would never have thought about missing church on Sunday. So we had our honeymoon, went back to church on Sunday, and I went back to work on Monday. Now people get married on a Saturday and take the whole next week off. They go to grand places on their honeymoon and I ask the husband, "If you take her there on your honeymoon, what are you going to do for your anniversary?" They say, "Well, Dad is paying for this." Well go for it, but when you start paying, I promise you, you are going to have trouble outdoing what you just did on your honeymoon! Now get this picture: in the Old Testament, a man wasn't given a weekend, or given a week; he was given a year to get all his honey do jobs done first, so he and his wife would live happily ever after. Wow, I love that verse!

Jesus in Deuteronomy

Okay, now you are asking, where is Jesus in the book? He's in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. He is the prophet greater than Moses. You have to remember that the book of Deuteronomy was so important to the nation of Israel. Did you know that it was their favorite book of the Pentateuch? If you read any of the Rabbi's, if you read any of the ancient writings, if you studied Jesus, Deuteronomy is quoted over and over again, along with Genesis; the first book of the Pentateuch and the last book of the Pentateuch. The Jewish people were so looking for the Messianic age, the age of salvation when they would be free, that they actually believed that God would send the prophet. It had been four hundred years since they had heard from God. They had no prophet, and all of a sudden, John the Baptist appeared and he seemed to be a prophet of God. So when they first came out to John, the first question they asked him was are you Elijah? No...Are you the Messiah? No...Are you the prophet? No...Then they asked, "Then why are you baptizing...?" When they asked John if he was the prophet, they were asking if he was the one who fulfills what Matthew talked about. He said no, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals." He told them the reason he was baptizing was because God told him to baptize and to get them ready for the coming of the Messiah.

Do you remember when Jesus showed up and He fed the five thousand people? After He had fed them, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" (John 6:14).

Do you remember when the woman at the well was talking to Jesus and she kind of insinuated that He was the prophet? She said, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." That is what a prophet does; he speaks on behalf of God.

Then in John 7:38, Jesus has just spoken these words, "Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in

Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (The Holy Spirit didn't come until after the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension back to the Father's right hand side.) When He said that, the people said, *man, nobody speaks like this man, this really is the prophet!*

Then in Acts chapter 3, after the Jewish nation had rejected Jesus and crucified Him, Peter is preaching and he quotes Moses and reveals that Jesus is the prophet that was like Moses. Then he makes this statement: “Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days.”

Prophet Greater than Moses

So, as we think about Jesus as the prophet greater than Moses, let's just think how that is. Moses was the greatest figure in the Old Testament, but he looked forward to a day when another prophet would come, and this prophet would bring in the Messianic salvation. This prophet would be the Messiah of God. As a matter of fact, when the writer of Hebrews was writing, preaching to his young congregation, in the beginning he was going to compare Jesus to Moses and say that Jesus is greater than Moses. So, my premise as we leave the book of Deuteronomy and get ready for the book of Joshua, is Jesus, in Deuteronomy, is the prophet greater than Moses. When you think about Moses, he turned water into blood, but when you think about Jesus, He turned water into wine. When you think about Moses, he walked through the waters of the Red Sea, but when you think about Jesus, He walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee. When you think about Moses, he instituted the Passover, but when you think about Jesus, He instituted the Lord's Supper. When you think about Moses, he is the mediator of the Old Covenant, but when you think about Jesus, He is the mediator of the New Covenant. When you think about Moses, he spoke the very words of God, but when you think about Jesus, He is the very Word of God. When you think about Moses, he revealed God's Law, but when you think about Jesus, He revealed God's grace. When you think about Moses, he led God's people out of Egypt, but when you think about Jesus, He led God's people out of sin. When you think of Moses, he is the servant in God's house, but when you think about Jesus, He is the Son of God over God's house. When you think about

Moses, he brought God's victory over Pharaoh so all of Egypt would know, but when you think about Jesus, He brought God's victory over Satan so the whole world would know.

Moses told us two things about a prophet: When He speaks, He will speak the very words of God and you had better listen to Him, and if you don't listen to Him, there is a consequence. The question is, how do I know if He is really a prophet? Moses said that if He is really a prophet, what He says will come true.

Let's test if Jesus really was the prophet greater than Moses. What did he say? After He went to Caesarea-Philippi, He asked the disciples who they thought He was, and told them that being able to confess Him did not come from flesh and blood, but came from the Father who is in Heaven. As they began to build up their thoughts of Him being the prophet and the Messiah, He said, *guys, we are going to Jerusalem. When we get to Jerusalem, I am going to fall into the hands of the priests and they are going to rough Me up. They're going to kill Me, but don't worry, on the third day, I will rise again.* And then in Matthew 17, as they move closer to Jerusalem, He said, *guys, when we get there, I'm going to have to suffer. I'm going to suffer all things the Scriptures talked about, and I'm going to be killed. I'm going to be buried, but on the third day I will rise again.* And then in Matthew 20, again He said, except this time He speaks more clearly, *when we get there, I'm going to be crucified, but on the third day I will rise again.* Then, in Matthew 26, two days before the Passover, He said, *guys, I'm going to be crucified.*

This thought hit me this week; it would be really easy for a person to stage his death. I mean anybody can go out and get themselves killed, agreed? If you had said the things Jesus said, you would be asking for death! Now let me ask you this; while it would be easy to stage a death, how difficult would it be to stage a resurrection? It is one thing to get yourself killed; it is quite another thing to make yourself back alive three days later! Jesus Christ went down like He said He did, but He also came up like He said He would, so we know He is the prophet from God.

Let me remind you that Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Which road are you

on? I heard somebody a couple of weeks ago say something that just shook me to my core. They were talking about a church that believes in works for salvation and said, "You know we are all going to the same place. We're just taking different roads." The Prophet said there is only one road that leads to the Father. He didn't say I am a way, a truth, and a life. No, He said I am the way, the truth and the light, and no one comes to the Father but by Me.

Do you know what the consequence is going to be to you if you don't believe what He said to be true? If you stay on your road of morality, if you stay on your road of good works, if you stay on your road of popularity, if you stay on your road, it is leading you farther and farther away from where you think you are going. But it is amazing that even while you are on the road you are on, (which is the road to Hell, because you are already spiritually dead, separated from God) the moment you repent of being a sinner and put your faith in Jesus, that very moment you will find yourself on the Jesus road, and it leads you to the Father. The most important thing you can do in your life is to eat the Bread of Life, and to drink the Living Water, and you will never thirst again.