

Bible Study – Deuteronomy Chapter 11 – Obedience & Disobedience

In the last study, we saw how God would use the Israelites as his instruments of judgement against the Canaanites. However, Moses reminds them that even though they are carrying out this judgement, it is not because of their righteousness and points out their shortfalls. He also reminds them of God's grace and love in their lives. Today, we conclude the second sermon from Moses with a reminder of how he started this; to love and obey God because of His love for them.

Read Deuteronomy 11:1 – 17

Moses concludes this section with how he started it: by exhorting Israel to covenant loyalty. He then talks about the discipline of the Lord your God, on both the Egyptians (Exodus 14) and certain Israelites, specifically Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16:12-15, 20-33), reminding Israel of God's protection and justice on his chosen people. As Moses repeats his exhortation to obey God's commands for their own good, he begins to compare the land they left to the land they are about to possess, illustrating the difference of what they were leaving behind to what they were going to. As added incentive to love the Lord God and to obey His commands, they would enjoy abundant crops in their new land.

Q. In verses 2-7, Moses goes into detail regarding God's punishment on the Egyptians and on Dathan and Abiram. What do you think is Moses' purpose in giving these details? Does it give you comfort or encouragement or does it give you worry or uneasiness about how God has dealt with these incidents?

Q. In verses 8-15, Moses implores the Israelites to obey the commandments that he is giving them, with promises of blessings in the land that they are going to possess. Moses also goes into detail, comparing the lands of Egypt and Canaan. What do you think Moses is trying to show to Israel in his comparison? Do you think this was sufficient incentive for the Israelites to obey God's commands?

Q. In verse 16-17, Moses warns about turning away from the Lord God and worshipping another. Why do you think Moses inserts this warning here? What could cause the Israelites to worship another? Does the same reason for Israel also apply to us regarding the worship of another? How can we keep guard on preventing this from happening in our lives?

Read Deuteronomy 11:18-32

Moses commands the Israelites to keep the word of God close to them, specifically in their heart and soul, and on their bodies. He also reminds them to teach these words to their children as it would bring blessing to them in the land they are to possess (cf. Deut. 6:3, 6-9). If the Israelites are to follow the commands of the Lord God, they would be blessed in the land they are to possess. If they disobey, however, they will be cursed in their new land.

Q. Moses uses the word “Today” frequently in the chapters we have studied thus far. In this chapter, what do you think “Today” means and its significance? What response do you think Moses was trying to get out of Israel (Joshua 24:15)? What needed to be the motivation behind their response (Joshua 24:16-25)?

Q. Moses summarizes what Israel needs to do in v.22: 1) Loving the Lord your God, 2) Walking in all his ways, and 3) Holding fast to him. By doing this, God would remove the nations in the land and give it over to Israel as He promised Abraham. Knowing that God also requires this from Christians, which of the three commands above do you find most difficult to follow and why? Do you think you miss out on God’s promises and blessings by not following one (or all) of the commands above? What can you do to follow in the ways of God (2 Peter 1:3-10)?

Moses concludes his second sermon with an emphasis on the obedience to the commands of the Lord God. If Israel obeyed, they would receive blessings. If they disobeyed, they would be cursed. On the plains of Moab, Israel had a decision to make as to whether they were going to follow the Lord God or not. God demonstrated His love for the Israelites, by choosing them amongst more powerful and perhaps more deserving nations, to be the object of His affection. He also disciplined them, out of love, so that they would be the righteous and royal priesthood he wanted them to be. With this demonstration, it should have been an easy choice for Israel.

Those who call themselves Christians also see the same love that God showed to the Israelites; having been chosen and redeemed for his purposes and being disciplined so they would be more like Christ. The choice to follow His commands must still be made each day. Those choices will result in either blessings or curses in the Christian’s life.