

APRIL 7

Deuteronomy 31:1-32:27

One of the things that happens when you read your Bible year after year, even if you have a brain like mine that only works intermittently, is that you make connections. You read something here, and later in another OT book or in the NT, you find the same, or similar, thing. It helps make all of this reading a lot of fun, especially knowing the Spirit is showing you stuff. You can always do a word search, but this is different. There is nothing like making natural connections to spark your curiosity. Below, I'll mention some things about the "sons of God." I didn't get that out of a seminary class or someone's book. It just happened after reading the Bible through for a few years. Suddenly all these puzzle pieces that I'd been viewing, year after year, came together. After preaching and studying for years, I know the difference between things that the Lord has led me to find naturally in my time together with Him, and things I dig up for a sermon. The stuff I read or find for a sermon is either forgotten or stored up with other information in my head. What the Lord shows me becomes a part of my heart and conviction in following Him in the harvest. I think this will be the same for you.

Deuteronomy 31

Notice the recurring words, *strong and courageous*. We'll be seeing them again.

Vs. 1-6 This is the conclusion of Moses' sermon, but not the end of his words in the book. This was probably one of the longest and greatest sermons ever preached. Even though we'll see that Israel, as a nation, didn't obey what God said through Moses, this particular generation did.

V. 2 I read a comment that Moses was saying here that he was too old to lead Israel in the conquest of Canaan. That is not the point. In a couple of chapters we'll hear that Moses was fit until the day he died. If Joshua and Caleb were about the same age, they were scrappy 80 year-olds. Moses could have done it but God said, "No."

V. 4 The victories against Sihon and Og were important motivational events that God had designed.

V. 6 *Leave you or forsake you* is quoted by the writer of Hebrews in 13:5. Take note of these words because we'll see them again and something like this is echoed today in Luke.

Vs. 7-8 There has already been a ceremony giving Joshua the leadership. As a good leader, Moses is charging Joshua again in front of the people. You may recognize *strong and courageous* from the famous verse in Joshua 1:9. Joshua 1:8 is also a famous verse but we'll talk about that when we get there. Both here in Deuteronomy and there in Joshua, these two words are said several times. *Leave you or forsake you* is repeated again also.

V. 8 is quoted again to Joshua, and later in the NT in Hebrews 13:5.

Vs. 9-13 Notice the importance of the Feast of Booths. Although all the men had to be present at the tabernacle every year for this event, every seventh year everyone had to come to the tabernacle. On that occasion, the scroll of Deuteronomy would be read. God built the feasts to influence the men, who would influence the nation. And then these special events would aid families in teaching their children. And then we read in Nehemiah 8:17 that Israel never kept the Feast of Booths after Joshua.

Vs. 14-15 This was God's commissioning of Joshua. I wonder if the people were impressed that the pillar of cloud appeared over the tabernacle. God would do more to elevate Joshua.

I know the minute Moses died and was standing with God, getting a big hug, he thought, "Why didn't I do this sooner?" Yet as I read this it makes me feel like moving out of a house, going room to room to make sure it's in order and then finally you turn out the light and shut the door. It's kind of funky and sad. But again, the minute he was in heaven, looking out over the golf course and seeing the club house, I'll bet Moses said, "Yes!"

Vs. 16-18 This appears to have taken place as Moses and Joshua were standing before the tabernacle. Maybe when Moses heard this he was happy to be going. Notice that their sin will be idolatry. It will be a very personal affront to God since He is the Only God and has saved them. Notice how the word *forsake* is used of the people and of God. It is cause and effect. We'll see this in the NT today.

V. 18 This defines a lot of God's judgment. As we do to God, He does to us. But beyond that, we see over and over again that He acts in mercy and grace, when we don't deserve these things and He is restlessly seeking to save and guide mankind. It isn't that there isn't grace in the OT. There is plenty of it. But His grace is seen in all of its clarity after all of the OT history, and then as it is defined in the coming and sacrifice of our Lord.

Vs. 19-22 Moses preached a sermon, and now he was writing a song.

V. 23 I don't know if anyone else heard this, but Joshua had a heart of faith and you couldn't want any more confirmation than this.

Vs. 24-30 The book of Deuteronomy was placed next to the ark of the covenant. The Ten Commandments were inside. Now Moses must have written the song and was getting everyone together to hear it. This was a lot of work for Moses. Again, it reminds me of moving.

Deuteronomy 32:1-27

So actually, God wrote this song. I'll bet it had a catchy tune. Now, after preaching and writing this song, Moses gets to sing.

Vs. 1-3 This song was to permeate the minds of the people like dew. Catchy tunes do this to us. Once you get it in your mind, it is hard to get it out. This is calling all creation to testify to the truth. The greatness of God will be seen in the contrast of His goodness and grace to them and their rebellion toward Him. Israel will be seen as the example of what happens when man is shown mercy by God, but the power of sin remains unbroken.

Vs. 4-7 This is the summary of the charge against Israel. Notice v. 6. There are very few references in the OT where God is referred to as *father*. That makes this unique.

Vs. 8-9 These are very important verses. There is good evidence for this reading *sons of God*. It refers to angels to whom God gave the guardianship of the nations. You find *sons of God* also in Job 1:6 where they are definitely angels with responsibility to watch over the earth. In Job, Satan seems to be the head of these angels. Again, in Genesis 6:2 as a contributing cause of the wickedness in mankind, these sons of God are very likely angels. In Daniel 10 you see these *sons of God*, among whom the nations were divided, as the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece and you realize they are demons. Link this together with what Satan tells Jesus in the temptation and what Paul says about the principalities and powers, and you get a picture of God having given Satan a kind of guiding responsibility over the mankind and the nations that would arise. God never revoked that responsibility from Satan after the fall of Satan or the fall of man. It seems that with the fall of mankind, Satan's guidance over mankind and the nations went from a servant's role to that of a ruling guardian's authority, because of our sin. Yet, within this system that God Himself set up, He chose one man and one nation for Himself to be a witness to the world, and through which His plan of redemption would go forward.

Satan thought that He had crippled God's plan in getting Israel to deny God and follow idols, and then especially in getting Israel to crucify its Messiah; but God's plan for Israel will be fulfilled during the time of "Jacob's Trouble," (the Tribulation) and then in the Millennium. Also, after Christ's resurrection, a new nation sprang into being, over which Satan has no authority. This temporary nation has no geographical boundaries, no common language, no unique ethnicity. This nation without earthly definition has only one common link: The Blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Today it is the Church that God is using to work in the harvest and to win the day and hold back the night. Soon, Israel will take up the torch.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 *But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

Vs. 10-14 This is God loving and establishing Israel. It is pure grace.

Vs. 15-18 This, unfortunately, will be Israel's response after they get into the land.

V. 17 This is reminiscent of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:20, *No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons.*

Vs. 19-22 We'll see this throughout all of Israel's history from Judges to Malachi. What is interesting here is the prophetic reach of these verses. In Romans 10 Paul and the Spirit will tell us that that foolish nation is the church.

V. 21 Paul quotes the second half of this verse in Romans 10:19, referring to the church taking over Israel's responsibility to be a witness to the nations and thus making Israel jealous enough, eventually, to get saved. Reading the first half of the verse explains a lot of things and helps to understand the verse in Romans better.

Vs. 23-27 are interesting. This sounds like what Moses said to God, that if He destroyed them in the wilderness, the nations would think ill of God. In this case, the nations would think they were responsible for the demise of Israel, maybe by cursing them like Balak tried to do. It adds something to this verse when you think of vs. 8 and 9 and the spiritual dimension of what God is doing. In spite of Israel's sin and rebellion, and regardless of the spiritual opposition they have and will face, God will bring Israel to a place of honor, fulfilling their mission and destiny.

Luke 12:8-34

Vs. 8-12 Jesus continues (from yesterday) His talk to His disciples concerning the leaven of the Pharisees and fearing to speak the truth. Paul must have known this saying of Jesus when he shares this with Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:11-13, *The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.*

Since all of the Twelve, except for Judas, were believers who couldn't lose their salvation, how do you account for all of what Jesus is saying here? I think this is a general statement about the persecution they will face. Some of it is a warning to them and some is an assurance of justice in the battle.

Vs. 8-9 These are for the disciples. They are being left on earth to give testimony. They will be acknowledged before the angels in that they will receive help. But if a person decides to hide and not testify of Christ and not acknowledge Him, what help do they need since they are really trying to help themselves. In this sense, although they really do need help but are helping themselves, Jesus will "deny" His own help by not sending angelic assistance. That is my take on this. It all goes back to "I will never leave you or forsake you." But if we choose to leave and forsake our testimony of Him, He withholds His help. I think that makes sense.

Vs. 10-12 This is justice to the unbelieving. In their current situation, some were blasting Jesus, but some were calling Jesus demon-possessed. God was keeping track of all of that. There would be justice. The concern of the disciples was to be willing to speak in persecution and allow the Spirit to speak through them.

V. 12 is not meant to be the verse of assurance for the unprepared Sunday school teacher. It only works if you're being persecuted in the harvest.

Vs. 13-34 The fear of death and persecution isn't the only thing that keeps us from following in the harvest. The other destructive force to following Christ as disciples is the desire for stuff and the anxiousness for our basic needs.

Some of these sayings are new, and some of them were said earlier in His ministry to the disciples after He selected the Twelve and gave the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7, Luke 6). Like a good teacher, Jesus didn't say something just once. In this case, the needs of the disciples are different and they have a much more mature idea of what it means to follow Jesus. Now, that old message has new meaning. As Paul said to the Philippians in Philippians 3:1, *Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me, and is safe for you.*

Jesus' method of training His disciples was to orient them (all the time up to and including the Sermon on the Mount), involve them in ministry with Him, and as they grew, as the occasions presented themselves, He taught them as they lived together. Since this portion, occurring here in Jesus' training of His disciples, is unique to Luke, as you read it, think of what it might have

meant to the disciples now. They had seen the crowds leave Jesus and they've seen the Pharisees unite with the Herodians to destroy Jesus. They had seen Jesus' power in ways that assured them that He was the Son of God and crowds still followed Him, but Jesus was talking more and more about His death and resurrection.

Vs. 13-21 The point here is that there was no need for anxiousness or security. The ground brought forth from God every year. A disciple's security is that his treasure and provider is in heaven.

Vs. 22-31 This was said in the Sermon on the Mount. Notice the impact of vs. 25 and 26. This is a slight addition to the Sermon. I like the translation of a "cubit." If you can't add 18 inches to the length of your life, why worry about the rest? For all of our health consciousness, there is nothing we can do to add 18 inches. Wow! And God has already determined, like with Moses, when it is time to turn off the lights and shut the door.

Vs. 32-34 This first verse is unique to Luke and I'm very challenged here. Since it is the Father's good pleasure, understanding the absolute desire of our Father to bless us in the harvest, we should have this heart. It doesn't mean God is asking all of us to give everything away (to some He did and does), but we should have this joy of heart. We should know this so that if He said it, we'd do it. If we can't do it, we don't really understand the impact and joy of what Jesus just said and it may be that we, as disciples, have a case of the "idols." We are not that far removed from what we are reading in Deuteronomy. Notice in v. 15 that Jesus uses a very strong repeated caution. This is extremely dangerous for us as followers. The desire for other things than Christ on this earth is a "lamer" of disciples and a killer of fruit.

So much of what we are reading points to the need to have the power of sin broken and for mankind to be redeemed. Through Israel, God has shown mankind that sin is the most powerful destructive force in reality. Through Israel God has shown mankind and the angelic world that His grace and love have no end. But now through Christ, we see God's infinite wisdom in all He has done. Through a "defeat" on the cross has come victory, and now the weak and foolish and low and despised have been gathered into a "nation" of the redeemed, bonded together in the blood, life and love of Christ to enter the harvest following Him. And when our work is done, Israel will recall who their "rock" is, call His name and finish the work God has given them to do.

Psalm 78:32-55

Isn't it weird that we're reading the end of Deuteronomy and the song of Moses and then also reading this psalm that addresses the same things?

Vs. 32-35 These verses seem to be referring to Kadesh-barnea and the death of that generation. Look at Deuteronomy 32:4, 15 and 18 and Psalm 78:35. Pretty cool, huh? This is one of the reasons that reading The One Year Bible "rocks."

Vs. 36-41 Now the psalmist is showing how they put God to the test in the wilderness. The rebellion of Korah, the crying of the people for meat and for water, and Baal-Peor would have been a part of this.

Vs. 42-55 This is the summary of their salvation. It was God's love for Israel shown in freeing them from Egypt and giving them the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Underline in your Bible what **God did** and what **they did**.

We don't want to imitate Israel. What "story" is our claim to fame (redemption) and what should that mean for us as we follow Jesus in the harvest? See Luke above.

Proverbs 12:21-23

Now, going backwards, I understand that a prudent person judges situations and weighs and watches his words. I understand that God delights in us when we act faithfully.

So, how do you understand that *no ill befalls the righteous*? The meaning must be hinted at in the second part of v. 21. A wicked person is full of trouble, anxiousness and inner conflict. That must be the "ill" that befalls him; that is, being full of stress, full of conflict and having a bad conscience.

All sorts of bad things happen to righteous people, but the permanent "ill" of having a sick heart, mind, and conscience, and living in inner conflict and stress, doesn't happen to someone whose heart is being massaged daily by the Spirit in the Word. Knowing God and His love and forgiveness in Christ defines us and determines our actions and thoughts. God in us and with us continually protects and heals us, as we follow Him.

Didn't Jesus just say something like this in Luke?