

MARCH 25

By now you've worked off your McReuben and Shamrock Shake. Set your sights on April 1, no joke, and work to stay caught up. Deuteronomy is fantastic reading, but there isn't a lot of action. There will be more action in Joshua and then we'll roll for several months reading about one person after another. That will be more interesting for you. By May 1 everything will go faster. We'll be in Judges and in the Gospel of John. For now, if need be, forget about these Reading Notes and just keep up in The One Year Bible. If you get behind, put the Bible somewhere where it is visible, like on a kitchen counter, and when you pass by it, sit down, read a page, mark the page as read, and jump back into what you were doing. The discipline you develop will stay with you all your life. You'll feel good about yourself, because you are gaining God's Word and heart, and He'll notice you are doing this for Him. Today we know Him here as we follow Him in the harvest; tomorrow we will be with Him forever.

Deuteronomy 4

These chapters in Deuteronomy are like sitting down to an amazing feast, where everything you'd want is there, but there's too much. Or it's like having a late-night conversation with someone you haven't seen in years who you really respect, and everything they're saying is good and confirms and strengthens your heart, but you know in the morning you won't remember it all. This book, these chapters, is like a deep well that any disciple will want to come back to repeatedly to drink from. So, mark up your Bible and highlight everything that speaks to you, that you think is important for you, for us, as disciples following Christ in the harvest. Next year, and the next and the next, when you read this again in The One Year Bible, you'll find more each time.

Vs. 1-4 This is like the prologue to Moses giving the new generation instructions. This long "talk," probably given over a week, will be Moses' final words. Although v. 44 says *law*, the word is really "instruction." Moses is advising the people, from his love for Yahweh and his love for them, to follow the Lord.

V. 2 Notice that the Pharisees, like all of us, were guilty of both of these. They added traditions to the law, as if to enforce what can only come from a heart of faith. Then, they lightened the law to create loopholes for the sins they liked, like divorcing a wife for any reason.

Notice the contrast in vs. 3 and 4. Listening to Moses and following God was illustrated in what happened at Baal-peor. Those who sinned died and those *who held fast to the Lord* lived.

Vs. 5-8 Israel was to have been a very simple country with their entire routine ordered around their feasts. The nations would have thought they were nuts, leaving their homes and fields for these celebrations, always taking one day off of work per week. Nuts. But as they obeyed the Lord, all nations were to have seen that something else was at work. God's blessing of Israel's love and faith would have won nations and people to the Lord. That was the plan.

Vs. 9-14 I think the primary thought here was that the people were to fear the Lord. All of these people, if born at that time, had seen the Lord descend on Mt. Sinai. God wanted to instill a respect and awe. Not only that, they had seen what happened to the generation that rebelled against the Lord and how it caused the entire nation to wander for 38 years. God was to be respected, held in awe and feared. Then, out of love for their kids and concern for the future of the nation, they were to teach their children.

Vs. 15-19 Notice again that this begins with a caution. Moses really loved these people. I never noticed the connection of the people hearing God but not seeing Him, and how that related to not making an image.

V. 19 And they were warned not to worship any of the heavenly bodies. When you read the days of creation you notice that the sun, stars, etc., were made on the fourth day. In an interesting way, that made them secondary and unnecessary, not only because God made them, but because there already was light and vegetation on the earth. They were made only to serve mankind, not to be worshiped by mankind.

Vs. 20-24 God was their Savior and their Lord who visibly led them to freedom and salvation.

Vs. 21-22 Yet even as great as Moses was, his own disobedience to the Word of God brought God's punishment. How much more should the people be alert to obeying God and not making Him angry?

Vs. 23-24 Another warning. It is fair to say here that Moses was saying they were not to treat God like a "religion." They were in relationship with a living, listening, and seeing Lord and Savior.

Vs. 25-31 What an amazing portion of Scripture. This is prophetic to the point of telling of the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 25-26 Moses was a wise steward over God's house. He knew these people. This generation was "charged up" on the fear of God, but if they failed to teach the next generation, they would stray from God.

Vs. 27-29 This happened, officially, after the devastating rule of King Manasseh. Israel was exiled for 70 years, one year for every Sabbatical year they missed. The book of Daniel accounts for the entire time of the exile. If you want to see an example of v. 29, read Daniel, chapter 9. This promise has been available to every generation of Israel. The last scattering of Israel happened to the generation that rejected the Christ.

V. 30 Israel will pray this prayer earnestly when they see the day of the Son of Man, the Tribulation, begin. Then there will be a national turning of Israel to God. For those seven years of Tribulation and for the thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will be a testimony and witness to the nations of the glory of God.

V. 31 This is the promise to Abraham and the hope of Israel. Israel may fail to obey the covenant they made at Sinai, but God will never forget the covenant He made with Abraham. Notice what both Mary and Zechariah say in Luke 1:50-80. Both of them mention God's promised mercy to Israel. That mercy has always been there, and it will "kick in" with full power when Israel turns to God in the future and begs for their Messiah's return.

Vs. 32-40 Again, this section is a powerful plea from Moses and God Himself for the people to take to heart what has been done for them. What deep love and faithfulness God had shown them.

V. 40 This command is based on the living proof of God's love and salvation.

For us as disciples, our response to God is and always has to be from His love and His salvation. God does call us to hardship and to sacrifice in the harvest, but Jesus walked there before He ever called us. What He paid will always outweigh anything we ever do in this life. We will always be the unworthy servants who, when we have done all that is commanded us, say, "we have only done what was our duty." But we obey and do this because we are, and always will be, overwhelmed by the super abundance of His grace, love and mercy.

Notice the reference to Israel being given the land *for all time*. This will explain the next few verses.

Vs. 41-43 This might seem out of place. Suddenly there is another subject. Moses has been talking about them polluting the land through idolatry, but there is another way for them to pollute the land, through murder and bloodshed. The next great curse on creation, after Adam

and Eve rebelled against God, was that Cain killed Abel and "hid" his blood in the earth. God cursed the ground. When Israel is finally exiled out of the land, which has just been spoken about, it is because of how King Manasseh filled the land with innocent blood.

Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he made Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. (2 Kings 21:16)

and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon. (2 Kings 24:4)

You don't really have to wonder what God thinks about the killing of innocent children for the sake of our sexual freedom and convenience. The Canaanites sacrificed the children born through Baal worship to Moloch. For all of this, after hundreds of years of patience, God finally judged them through Israel saying that the land vomited them out. If God is silent, God's silence is scary. There is grace and there is patience, but His patience is His kindness trying to lead us to repentance. When we reject His kindness, only judgment is left.

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

As a friend of mine said, "God doesn't always pay on Friday." The Bible, from one end to the other, says that "pay day" is coming.

The cities of refuge were a provision to make sure the innocent were protected, so that the land wouldn't be polluted through the shedding of innocent blood.

Vs. 44-49 What we have read is the reason Moses needed to give the coming instructions and motivation to follow the Lord. Now we are told where this all took place. Tomorrow we will begin reading Moses' great sermon to Israel.

Luke 6:39-7:10

Luke 6:39-49

Jesus finishes up His "disciple orientation." Think of what you just read in Deuteronomy. Moses will keep telling Israel to heed God's words. Jesus is telling His disciples to heed His words. How interesting. The instructions Jesus is giving the disciples here will be repeated again in Luke. I wonder how often Jesus repeated these things to His disciples in different situations over the next two years.

When you read these same things in Matthew, chapters 5-7, it is a bit easier to see the logical connections between one thing and another. The order was very logical and necessary for the disciples.

Vs. 39-42 Jesus had just told the disciples that to follow Him in the harvest they needed to have a perspective of life on earth, working in the harvest, which was very supernatural. If they didn't have that, they would be horrible makers of disciples, like blind men leading blind men.

V. 40 They had to become total disciples of Jesus to be like Him. Their disciples in the future would reflect their same level of discipleship. That could be good, or bad.

Vs. 41-42 This is a warning to them, and to us. The disciple maker and the disciple are in view here. For the next two years, Jesus would be helping them to examine their own eyes.

Vs. 43-45 Just as the "eye" stood for perception and honesty of heart in the last illustration, the fruit is an illustration for the content of the heart. Disciples of Jesus are not primarily people of skill or ability, but they are deep lovers of Jesus. It all flows from a heart in love with Christ.

Vs. 46-49 And having said all of that about heart, love is seen in obedience. To have a feeling of love is not the same as following. What are His commandments? Most of the commandments I

see from Jesus involve following and bearing a cross in the harvest, acknowledging His name before men. That is a love and a life that can withstand this planet and its sickness.

Luke 7:1-10

This was probably the first big lesson for the Twelve. Here was a Gentile who actually had the kind of faith in Jesus that recognized Him as one with authority, a Lord. If you are a master, you say it and it is done. This Roman soldier knew Jesus was a ruler. As in the parable above, not everyone who calls Jesus “Lord” recognizes Him as Lord. The proof is in the doing.

V. 9 You don't see Jesus marveling over faith very often.

Psalm 68:1-18

David must have been having a good day. This seems to have been written after David brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem, fulfilling David's dream to dwell in the presence of the Lord in Zion.

Vs. 1-3 We haven't read about David's life yet, but this is a very joyous summary of his suffering and that God had saved and vindicated David.

Vs. 4-6 This praise is to come from the oppressed and those in need of mercy and comfort. That was David for many years. God is a gentle protector.

Vs. 7-10 All the years before God established David in Zion, Israel lived as a prey of the nations. David is describing God bringing physical blessing and peace to Israel.

Vs. 11-14 This is some celebration among the people of the victories the Lord gave. Apparently the Hebrew is hard to understand, but later, we'll see that when Saul and David returned from battles, the women lined the roads and sang.

Vs. 15-18 This is a poetic expression of the greatness of Mt. Zion, Jerusalem, because the Lord chose it as His abode. All the other mountains were envious.

V. 18 Notice that Paul quotes this in Ephesians 4. Yahweh is seen here coming up the mountain into the city in victory, leading the captives. Here, the victor receives gifts and in Ephesians 4, having received the spoils of victory, He gives gifts to men. (See also, Isaiah 53:12.)

Proverbs 11:28

The thing is, society exalts the prominence of the rich, but you don't notice the leaves of trees.

I was reading this morning where Jesus told the disciples that it would be almost impossible for those with riches to enter the Kingdom of God. The disciples seem to have understood this and were shocked that to have possessions could actually block you from saving faith. But it seems that the issue is really who, or what, is ruling our hearts. If riches are our trust and our comfort and our hope, they are an idol, a god. If a person has that kind of god, it is hard to go to the real God who says, *blessed are the poor and go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.* (Matthew 19:21)