

OpenTheo

Deuteronomy 7 - 9



Deuteronomy - Steve Gregg

This commentary on Deuteronomy 7-9 by Steve Gregg emphasizes God's sovereignty and his desire for his people to remain faithful. The speaker notes that even though the nations they are fighting against may be mightier, God is mightier still, and the generation of Israelites must learn to trust God where their fathers failed. God's concern for his people is highlighted through his commandments forbidding idol worship and intermarriage with other nations. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of staying humble and recognizing God's power in all aspects of life.

Transcript

We're going to put in at Deuteronomy chapter 7 now where we've just begun the second discourse of Moses where he began by reciting the Ten Commandments and also gave in chapter 6 what we would call the Great Commandment, the greatest commandment according to Jesus. And his instructions to stay faithful, to prolong their time in the land. This is sort of the recurring theme of all of these discourses that they will be, they will prolong their time in the land and things will go well for them if they obey God's covenant.

And he's reminding them of things in their past that he hopes will be instructional in teaching them lessons about the present and the future. And he said in verse 7, I keep saying verse, sorry, verse 1 of chapter 7. The 7 is real big there, so I looked down I think in verse 7. Okay. Chapter 7, verse 1. When Yahweh your God brings you into the land which you go to possess and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites, the Amorites and the Canaanites, the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you.

And when Yahweh your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them, nor shall you make marriages with them. You should not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

For they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods. So the anger of

the Lord will be roused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them.

You shall destroy their altars and break down their sacred pillars. And cut down their wooden images and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

Yahweh your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. Now, it's interesting that he mentions that the seven nations of the Canaanites that they will defeat are specifically said to be greater and mightier than you. And at the end of verse one, I'm going to God's going to deliver into your hands seven nations that are greater and mightier than you.

And remember, that was the concern that the Israelites had when they sent the spies in the land that they felt like the land was full of people that were greater and mightier than them. If you look further over in chapter nine of Deuteronomy. In verses one and two, he refers to the nations in the land of Canaan as nations greater and mightier than you than yourself.

Cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim whom you know and whom you of whom you've heard it said, who can stand before the sons of Anakim. It's interesting that Moses is playing up this very feature that had stumbled the previous generation when they'd gone in and the spies came back. They said it's a fruitful land.

It's certainly a land worth having, but we can't take it because the people are mightier than we are. They're big. We're small.

They have cities that are walled up to the heavens. There's fortified cities. They're just not.

You know, it's not possible for us to defeat them. And it was hearing that discouraging news that caused the previous generation to turn back and say, we can't go in and to come under God's curse. It's amazing that Moses is taking the chance with this current generation of bringing these things before them and putting it in their face.

These people are bigger than you. These people are mightier than you. These people do have walled cities fortified up to the heavens.

And yet he apparently believes that the children of Israel need to be apprised of that. They need to be dealing with that in their thinking and yet realizing that it's God who's going to fight for them. So even though the nations are fighting against are mightier than they are.

Yet they're not mightier than God is, and therefore this generation is going to have to

learn to trust God as their fathers failed to do in the face of exactly the same challenges that discourage their fathers. Now, he says in verse two at the end of verse two, you shall not make any covenant with them or show mercy to them. Now, mercy is a good thing.

The Lord loves mercy. He wants us to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. However, there's time when people are beyond God's mercy.

It's time to judge them. Now, that doesn't mean that individuals among the Canaanites could not be saved because we know that at least one was and perhaps others. And that was Rahab.

Rahab was a Canaanite in the first Canaanite city. They conquered Jericho and she was converted. What's more, she even married a man of Judah named Solomon.

And yet in this law, it says you should not make marriages with them. But the concern here is that you're not supposed to intermingle these two societies. Rahab abandoned her Canaanite religion.

She abandoned her Canaanite society and she came over and became a proselyte to Judaism. It's clear here then that it's not that the Canaanites were condemned for their race because then Rahab would have been condemned to choose of that same race. But they were condemned for their culture and for their religion.

And God is not a racist. But many times certain ethnic groups are so wedded to their culture that you could speak of their nation and their ethnicity and so forth almost as all one thing. The Canaanites were worshippers of Molech and of Baal.

And yet an individual Canaanite could be saved. An individual Canaanite could come over to God's side. But those that would not, which is going to be the vast majority of them, if not almost all of them, they were going to have to be wiped out and it's not time to be showing mercy for them.

Showing mercy upon them simply means letting them live. If they live, they will be a stumbling block to you. That's what he says in the same chapter in verse 16.

He says, You shall destroy all the peoples whom Yahweh, your God, delivers over to you. Your eyes shall not have pity on them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you. This is God's concern.

He wants the Canaanites to be dealt with decisively and completely so that they don't remain as a temptation to the Jews. Now, Israel, as it turned out, did not wipe out all the Canaanites. And in fact, the Canaanites did become a snare to them.

And Israelites did lapse into worshiping Canaanite gods in later times. So God's concern

about this was no idle concern. It was a it was a genuine realization that the Israelites were subject to this.

Now, when you think about it, keeping an Israel, keeping a Canaanite alive, who will lead you into idolatry can bring the wrath of God on your whole nation. It should be seen as an act of treason. Later on in chapter 13, we're going to see that God says, if your son or your servant or your daughter or someone, your closest friend tries to lead you into idolatry, you shall have no pity on them.

Your eyes shall have no pity on them, but you shall stone them with stone. Why? Because they're leading you into idolatry and leading. If Israel's led into idolatry, then God will destroy Israel.

It's like it's like religious terrorism to introduce. Idolatry is to introduce that which is going to destroy the whole nation. And therefore, anyone who introduces it is like a traitor to the nation.

It's like they're it's like they're working for the enemy, trying to destroy the nation. And that's the capital offense as far as God's concerned. And the Canaanites as a group, as a race, as a religious people would have had that effect on Israel.

And so they're not to be tolerated, not even a little bit. And verse four says they will turn your sons away from following me and serve other gods as if they marry. If they're unequally yoked together with unbelievers, the assumption is not that your sons will leave these women over to the Jewish faith, but rather it's likely to go the other way.

There are times when a non-Christian marries a Christian and the Christian has a positive impact upon them. And there are times when women in particular have been saved by being married to Christian men, but it's not a good gamble to take. It's not very often that a man is converted through his wife's witness, though it can happen.

Peter says it can happen in First Peter chapter three. It says that a husband who's an unbeliever might be won over by a wife's good conduct. But no one should count on that being the case.

I heard the story about a young man and woman who came to their to a pastor for counsel for premarital counseling. They wanted to get married. They asked for counsel and the pastor found out that the young man was not a Christian and that the girl was a Christian.

And so he said to the girl here, stand up on this desk here. And so she had he had the girl stand on the desk and the young man on the floor and now hold hands with each other. Now you try to pull him up to the desk and he try to pull you down to the floor.

See how it works. You see, gravity was on his side. Nature was on his side.

Nature is on the side of unbelievers. Because they follow the natural course of the flesh and you as a Christian still have a flesh. You still have a flesh that responds to its natural inclinations.

Yes, you have something else, too, but to be bound together with somebody who's going to be drawing you in the direction of nature. Rather than in the direction of the new nature is going to be continually a struggle. And God assumed that if the Hebrew boys married the Canaanite girls that it would end up in the girls corrupting them, not not in the boys redeeming them.

Verse seven says, The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people for you are the least of all peoples. That is, when God chose them, they were just Abraham and his family. They weren't even a nation at all.

When he took them into Egypt, they were just 70 men and their families. And that was a pretty small group, too, compared to other nations. God didn't choose them because they were big and promising.

He chose them and then he made them big and promising. He doesn't choose people for salvation because they're specially superior to other people, but he does choose those who are not superior in order to make them superior to make them to improve them. To make them holy.

And so he chose them when they were nothing. But of course, he had a plan for them and made them something. He says in verse eight, But because the Lord loves you and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your father's Yahweh has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Now, it says that God didn't choose you because you were great, but he chose you because he loves you. He just chose to love you. It's just a choice he made.

You can choose just like God can choose to love somebody. And God decided that they were going to love not because of anything in them, but also because he was keeping the oath that he made to their fathers that he said he'd do something for their children, make them a great nation. So he was doing that.

Therefore, know that the Lord, your God, he is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love him and who keep his commandments and he repays those who hate him to their face to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates him. He will repay him to his face.

Therefore, you should keep the commandment, the statutes and the judgments, which I command you today to observe them. So God says, since you see, I have saved you

despite the fact that you have nothing to commend yourself to me. But I've done it because I'm keeping the covenant I made with your ancestors.

Therefore, you should know that demonstrates what kind of a God I am. I'm a faithful God. I keep covenants.

I'm keeping the covenant with your ancestors by saving you and therefore know that it's not going to be your. Superiority over other nations that keeps me faithful. But it will be, of course, you keeping my commandments because I will repay you to your face if you violate them.

And I do keep covenant to a thousand generations of those who keep my commandments. Who love me. So they weren't a great nation, but they had to be an obedient nation in order to stay in covenant with God.

They didn't have to be great. They didn't have to be wise. They didn't have to be strong, but they did have to be faithful and God be faithful to them.

Then it shall come to pass when you listen to these judgments and keep them and do them that the Lord your God will keep you keep with you the covenant and the mercy which he swore to your father and he will love you and bless you and multiply you will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil. The increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock in the land of which he swore to your father to give you. I might add, I'm sure probably you know this, but a person might read this and not know that when talks about the blessed their land with oil, not talking about petroleum, not talking about oil wells.

It's not all the oil they use is not petroleum. They use olive oil in their lamps and in the cooking and so forth. Olive oil is a very valuable commodity.

So he talks about their grain and their wine and their oil. It's not about agricultural products, obviously grain. Everyone knows that that is wine comes from the grapevine and oil comes from the olive trees.

You should be blessed above all peoples. There shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock and Yahweh will take away from you all sickness and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt, which you have known, but will lay them on those who hate you. You shall destroy all the people from the Lord your God delivers over to you.

Your eyes shall have no pity on them, nor shall you serve their God, for that will be a snare to you now. The blessings of keeping his covenant, he says, are prosperity and health. He will prosper them in all their agriculture if they're obedient and he'll take sickness away from them.

Now, they never really did honor the covenant very adequately, so they never really enjoyed these blessings of never having a sickness among them. It would've been interesting or maybe they did for brief periods. We don't really read of that.

What we read of in their history is their times of rebellion, generally, and they had very few times that they actually came back over to God. We don't read about whether they ever got sick or whatever during those times, but there were times when there was barrenness, even among righteous people. What should be noted here is that he's not saying that if you are a righteous individual, that you will not have any barren wombs and you will prosper and you will not get sick, but rather if the nation is obedient to God collectively, then barrenness and poverty and sickness will be not permitted.

God will spare them from those things, but this is a corporate promise, not individual. Hannah, for example, was barren at a time after this, during the period of the judges, and she was a righteous woman. It can't be said that she was barren because she was disobeying the covenant.

She was a pious woman, and so this is not an individual thing. A righteous man might be poor or even sick, but God said that the nation as a whole would be free from these blights if the nation as a whole was collectively barren. Hannah lived at a time when the nation was not faithful and therefore did not have these blessings.

She was a righteous person, but the nation she lived in was not a righteous nation, and therefore she didn't live under this exemption. None of them did. The nation would have these exemptions as the nation was righteous, not individuals as individuals were righteous.

Verse 17, if you should say in your heart, these nations are greater than I, how can I just possess them? Well, like their fathers had said, you should not be afraid of them, but you should remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. The great trials which your eyes saw, that is the older ones among them, those who are over 60, had seen with their eyes. And the wonders, actually those who are over 40, could have seen, and there was no one over 60.

Signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. You're afraid of them, but remember what God did to Egypt, then you won't be afraid because he's doing the same thing.

Moreover, the Lord your God will send the hornets among them until those who are left to hide themselves from you are destroyed. So even if you don't kill them all because they're hiding from you, God will find a way to route them out of their hiding places and destroy them. Now, not every last canine was destroyed, but that's because Israel didn't faithfully carry this out.

The canines that survived were not the ones that were hiding from them. They're ones that didn't apparently need to hide from them because they weren't being attacked. This is saying that if you are carrying out my instructions and wiping them off, if you happen to miss any of them because they're hiding, I'll find them for you.

I'll send hornets to drive them out. You shall not be terrified of them. For Yahweh, your God, the great and awesome God is among you.

And Yahweh, your God, will drive out those nations before you little by little. You'll be unable to destroy them all at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. But the Lord, your God, will deliver them over to you and will inflict defeat upon them until you are.

They are destroyed and he will deliver their kings into your hand and you will destroy their name from under heaven. Their dynasties will come to an end and there will not be ongoing remembrance of them because you will have wiped out their whole dynasty. No one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them all.

Now, I just would make this observation. And that is the way he used the word until. And the reason for that is because the term is used in a similar way in other passages and it can easily be misunderstood.

To say, I won't do such and such until such and such usually means that the until thing is a time where that's going to change. You know, I won't stop talking until I'm finished with this class, but I will stop talking then. The until tells you when the terminal point is of the present activity.

And yet not always, sometimes until simply describes what the goal is. It doesn't necessarily mean that the activity is going to end when the goal is reached. It just means that the activity will not end before the goal is reached.

The goal at least will be reached. What may happen after that is not under consideration in the statement. For example, no one will be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Does not mean but after you've destroyed them, then there will be people who are able to stand against you. Now, what he means is until the goal of conquering them all has been attained, you will find no opposition that is effective against you. Now, after that, that's another story.

It may continue to be the case if you're faithful to me after that, that still no one will be able to stand against you. There's not a prediction that this condition will change. And the reason I bring this up is because I've known people who've made something out of certain New Testament statements that don't that have the same kind of use of the word until, for example, in Luke 24.

I'm sorry, Luke 21, excuse me, the 2124. Jesus said about the destruction of Jerusalem. In 87, he said they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Now, many people have taken that to mean, well, Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles only until the times the Gentiles and then Jerusalem will be given back to the Jews. But I believe until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled simply means until the end of the world, until all the Gentiles have come in and at least it does not say that after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, something different is going to happen. It only says that Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles for that period of time.

That period of time may be the rest of history and there may be no turnaround of the situation. It's just pointing out that the times the Gentiles being fulfilled is the goal. During which time nothing is going to change about Jerusalem being trampled, but it doesn't say whether after that something will change, and that's what some people assume is the case.

In Romans 11, you have the same kind of statement in Romans 11, 25, where it says that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And some feel that this means, well, that means that after the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then the hardening of Israel will be turned around and they won't be hardened anymore. Well, that may be true, but it doesn't necessarily mean that.

The until there doesn't necessarily convey that thought. It could be simply saying part of Israel will be hardened. Well, there will always be part of Israel that's hardened.

And this condition will prevail until the end when all, when every last Gentile has been come in. That is, the condition of part of Israel being hardened will be an unchanging condition until this goal is reached. Now, after that, it doesn't mean anything's going to change.

It's not making any predictions about after that. In fact, the fullness of Gentiles becoming could easily be called the end of the world. If God's receiving Gentiles into the church right up until the day Jesus comes back, then the fullness of the Gentiles will not come in until the very end when Jesus comes.

So it's not saying that the hardening, the partial hardening of Israel is going to change after that. It's just saying it's going to remain steady as a condition until that goal is reached. And so also the same kind of wording is here in Deuteronomy 724, No one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Doesn't mean but after that, they'll be able to. It just means I'm giving you this goal to destroy them all. And until that goal is reached, you don't have to worry about whether

anyone will be able to stand before you or not.

Verse 25 says, You shall burn their carved images of their gods with fire. You shall not covet their silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest it be snared. You be snared by it.

For it is an abomination to the Lord your God, nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. But you shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it. For it is an accursed thing.

Now, not bringing an abomination into your house. Lots of people have, you know, on trips to India or, you know, other countries have picked up little trinkets in stores, little tikis and idols and Buddhas and things like that, you know, and they bring them home and they decorate their homes with them. It's not a good idea.

Even if it means nothing to you, if it's only a decoration, it's not a good idea to have idols. What to other people are idols to bring them into your house? Those are an abomination to God. And he says, don't bring them into your house.

It will be a snare to you. And, you know, it's possible that since the Bible says the gods that the heathen worship are demons, that you may invite demons into your home inadvertently by bringing these abominable things into the house. He is talking about idols and images and so forth here when he talks about the abomination.

Don't bring that into your house. So I believe that it's a real mistake for people to bring those things home with them and bring them into their home, because we do know that demons often do. Somehow become attached to certain dwellings and they're there for generations.

And the people who move into those houses find that there's spiritual things going on in those houses that they don't know what the source is. And you never know if that may have begun with somebody bringing some kind of an idol or something into that house or practicing idolatry there and some previous, you know, inhabitant. There are other abominable things, though, that shouldn't be brought into the house, I'm sure.

And those would be more like the abominable influences of certain literature or certain television programs or certain music probably would be regarded as an abomination to God. And certainly at least people who are raising children and stuff are very foolish to have in their homes things that can bring that kind of influence into their homes and can turn their children away from God. Bringing those things into your house is just inviting trouble into your home and your family.

And so it is forbidden. Chapter eight, every commandment which I command you today, you must be careful to observe that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to your fathers. And you should remember that the Lord

Yahweh, your God, led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness to humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

So he humbled you and allowed you to hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord of Yahweh. Now, there's references here to God humbling them through their experiences in the wilderness. And testing them to know if they would keep his commandments.

These are the kinds of statements that sometimes feed the mentality of openness theology, the idea that God doesn't necessarily know what we will do until we do it. And therefore, he tests us to find out. And certainly the wording here sounds that way.

And if we just take it at face value, we'll have to assume that God didn't know until he tested them, whether they would keep his commandments or not, because that's what it says in verse two. However, we have throughout the scriptures, especially the Old Testament, many anthropomorphic ways in which God speaks, whereas he speaks as if he's just a man that he learns things as men learned them. He has the weaknesses men have.

He, of course, in the in the teaching portions about God's character and about his nature, we learn that God doesn't. He's not like a man, but when he relates to men, he often relates to them as if he's a man, as if he has ignorance. He said to Cain, where is your brother? Like like God didn't know.

He asked Adam in the Garden of Eden. Where are you, Adam? Where are you? I'm in the bushes. I was naked.

I hid. How do you know you're naked? You didn't eat that fruit, did you? God actually, he doesn't know. Certainly God knew.

God told Abraham in the 18th chapter of Genesis that he was going down to Sodom to see if it was as bad there as he had heard. And we see in Chapter 11 of Genesis that God says, let us go down and see this tower that they're building this tower of Babel like he can't see it from where he is. The idea that God is geographically limited or limited in his knowledge.

I mean, all of those things I just gave examples of have nothing to do with him knowing the future. That has to do with him knowing stuff that was present. Where is Adam hiding? Where is Abel? Is Sodom as bad as I've heard? Let's go down and see this tower.

These are all present things. This has more to do with God knowing things that are, you know, geographically remote. Well, God's not geographically limited and nor is he, as far

as we know, limited in time.

And therefore, when he speaks as if he doesn't know something and needs to find out something, a lot of times he's just speaking in a, what we call anthropomorphic, a human-like way, but not necessarily telling us something about his innate omniscience or omnipresence or anything like that. On the other hand, if there was good grounds to believe open theology, this would be the kind of verse that would be supportive of that. The main thing is that I'd point out is that he mentions that this 40 years was used to humble them and to test them.

To humble them is interesting. He says, I humbled you with hunger. I caused you to hunger and humbled you in verse three.

And later on in verse 10, he talked about when you're no longer hungry, when you're full, beware that you don't forget the Lord your God. And he goes on to talk about other aspects of their prosperity in the future. In verse 12, when you've built beautiful houses and dwell in them.

And verse 13, when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and your gold and all that you have is multiplied. Then he says, verse 14, when your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord, you see, the problem here is that people get proud, arrogant, self-sufficient and forget God. One is humbled when they're brought to the point where they are totally dependent and know they are dependent.

Israel was humbled by eating manna. Why? Because they couldn't store it up. They couldn't provide for themselves.

They had to just eat what God supplied day by day. They knew themselves to be totally abjectly dependent upon him. There was no way to feel self-sufficient or independent of God.

And they had to stay humble and dependent. But he's, of course, talking about them getting their hearts lifted up that is with self-confidence and pride once they no longer have that circumstance. But God's trials in our lives often are there to bring to our attention our own weakness and impotence so that we'll be humbled by them.

And humility is a good thing. We need to be humble. And trials are a very good thing because in that sense, because trials are always, by definition, something we would change if we could.

If you could change it and could and did, it wouldn't be a trial. It's something you're in control over. You know, you wouldn't have any trials.

You just decide not to do it, decide not to have those sufferings and those disappointments and those afflictions. But it's in the nature of God's test that they are

out of your control. They test you to see if you'll turn to God and they also humble you by showing you that you really are not in control of your life.

God is. And so the problem was they were now going to come into the promised land where it would be possible for them to imagine that they were in control because they're going to make their living the same way other people's do. They're going to they're going to be living comfortably.

They're not going to be needy. They're not going to be dependent on God in ways that are as obvious as they were in the wilderness. And therefore, they can forget God.

They can get uppity and proud. Now, he said that he humbled them with hunger in verse three so that they might learn that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. That is, their living did not, was not just about survival physically.

It was about obedience to God. And we know that Jesus quoted this verse two in one of his temptations, his first temptation, when the devil said, why don't you turn these rocks into bread in Matthew chapter four and Luke four. And Jesus said, because it's written, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, which obviously meant living by feeding yourself.

And that was physically surviving is not all that matters. It's not a matter of how long you live, but rather how you live. Not whether you live longer, but whether you live well.

Living in obedience to the words of God, living by every word that comes out of mouth of God that has to do with how you live, not how long you live, how long you keep eating will have something to say about how long you live, because if you stop eating, you'll die. But God wanted them to know that there's two ways of living. One is just surviving physically.

The other is spiritually living according to the words of God. And that's what he tried to teach them with the trials and the tests and the commands and the seeing if they would obey and so forth in the wilderness. And he said in verse four, your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these 40 years.

Somebody asked me earlier, I think it might've been Alex, whether their shoes not wearing out, which is mentioned also later on and their garments not wearing out, whether that literally means that they supernaturally were made durable so that they literally never wore out or whether it's just a figure of speech that they never ran out of clothing. They never ran out of shoes. You know, that is if their shoes wore out, there were new ones available.

I don't know which way it is. I've always kind of taken it as the supernatural kind of way that, um, you know, God showed his supernatural intervention by their clothes never got

holes in them. Their shoes never got worn down, but it's not necessary to see it that way.

I suppose it could just mean that he's saying, um, you didn't ever have to wear worn out garments before any of your garments wore out. You had, you had abundance enough so you could replace them. And so you never wore them out.

Verse five. So you should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so Yahweh, your God chastens you. Now, back in chapter one in verse 31, he said, as he was talking about, uh, bringing them, God, bring them out of his Egypt.

He says, and in the wilderness, where you saw how the Lord, your God carried you as a man carries his son in all the way that you went until you came to this place. The idea of God being a father in Israel, being his children was not common in Jewish thought, but it was something God mentioned in the old Testament. They just didn't focus on it.

Jesus, of course, was the one who first introduced the Jews, the idea of thinking of God primarily as a father. And it was one of the distinctives of Jesus teaching. One of the two major distinctives of his teaching.

The other was the kingdom of God was the idea of God being the father. The Jews that his son did not speak of God as their father. And they spoke of God essentially as a King and a Lord and all those things, which he is, but they didn't understand his father's heart toward his children.

And this was something Jesus came to emphasize, but Jesus didn't invent it. Jesus didn't invent any of his teachings. They all came from the old Testament.

It's just that they were neglected old Testament truth. And they were sometimes things that the old Testament made mention of from time to time, but didn't emphasize, but which needed emphasis and which Jesus brought to the forefront of his teaching, like that God is a father to us. And it's a father's care for his children that is emphasized.

Some people have had fathers that were rather well abusive. Frankly, there are people who've had fathers that abandoned their homes or that abused them. And they, and they don't think of the father in a positive light, but it's, it's the positive aspects of a father's care for his son that God likens to himself.

Even Jesus, when he said you earthly fathers, even though you're evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your heavenly father give good things to those who ask him. And so here he is likened to a father in Deuteronomy 1 31, like a, like, like a man carries his son.

So the Lord carried Israel in the wilderness. And here in chapter eight, verse five, as a man chastens his son. So the Lord, your God chastens you.

Now chastens does speak about, you know, punishing, but it's not punishment like a king brings about on a criminal. It's punishment that a father brings on a son, which is corrective. The father loves his son and therefore corrects him.

Chastening is only an expression of the love of a father. When a king punishes criminals, it is not necessarily an expression of the king's love for the criminals. It is not even intended to be corrective.

It's intended to be punitive. But when a father punishes his children and inflicts pain upon them, it is intended as educational for them. It's supposed to make them better and wiser.

It is because he cares about them in their future that he corrects them. And that's how God treats Israel and us. Therefore, you should keep the commandments of the Lord, your God to walk in his ways and to fear him for Yahweh.

Your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks, of water, of fountains and springs. That must have sounded awfully good to people who lived in a desert for 40 years. A place of brooks and rivers, fountains and springs that flow out of the valleys and the hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

You can use those stones for buildings and they're strong, hard stones, and you can mine copper out of the hills. This sounds a lot like, frankly, this country and others. I mean, there are other countries, but this country, when people came here, they thought it was a fruitful land, a land that had every resource and every ability to produce great prosperity.

Not all lands have those blessings. Some do. I mean, but Israel was one of those.

Now, you wouldn't know it when you go to Israel today on long drives from place to place, you see just hot desert sand, you know, and it was that way for centuries. But that's because there's not a lot of rain there. In biblical times, God sent rain twice a year, the early and the latter rain.

Now I understand that Israel is having the early and the latter rains again. I can't verify this. I've been told this, that through most of the centuries that Israel was out of the land, there were not the early and the latter rains that were counted on in the days of Moses and Joshua and the time of the Old Testament.

But I heard that now that Israel's back in the land, those rains have come again. I can't verify that. That could be one of those urban legends about Israel that float around.

But the point is, we do know that the rain patterns have changed in that area over the

over the centuries. I can't verify what I just said a moment ago that I've heard, but I do know that archaeologists have found that there were times in the Middle East was lush and the Bible makes reference to it too. And even now, the Israelites have found that when they irrigate and bring in water, the land is not barren land at all.

They produce a lot of produce there. I understand they produce about a third of the citrus fruit for the world, and they grow a lot of stuff in what used to be a desert. All they do is bring in water.

Now, if in the days of Moses there already was water, there's rains twice a year, then this lushness, which is now to a large degree maintained by irrigation in Israel, the soil is good. It's not just sand. It's good soil.

It's capable of producing great crops. And that's what they found was the case when they came into the land, apparently in the days of Joshua, that this was a land not like Egypt. And that's what God actually says to them later on.

When they were in Egypt, they had to water that irrigate that draw water up from the river and irrigate. But and Moses later on in this discourse, you're going to point that out, that this land you're going to, it's not like Egypt, where you had to use a foot pump to draw water out of the river to irrigate it like a vegetable garden. But he says this is a place where the whole land is just the reins of God come upon this land.

And it's green and lush. So in that region, the land of Canaan was apparently unusually productive land. We know that the region where Sodom and Gomorrah had been in the Dead Sea region, which is just barren desert now, that that was once like the garden of the Lord, it says in the days of Abraham and Lot, he says in verse 10, when you have eaten to the full, then you shall bless the Lord, your God, for the good land which he has given you.

Beware that you do not forget the Lord, your God, by not keeping his commandments, his judgments and his statutes, which I command you today. Lest when you have eaten and are full and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and your gold are multiplied and all that you have is multiplied when your heart is lifted up and you forget the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, who led you through that great and terrible wilderness in which there were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water, who brought water to you out of the rock of Flint, who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know that he might humble you and that he might test you to do you good in the end. Then you say in your heart, my power and my might of my hand have gained me this wealth.

So beware that you don't come to that point. He gives it a long sentence with a lot of modifying clauses. Basically, he says, once you've been comfortable in your nice houses

and you've got abundance of everything, make sure your heart doesn't lift up and forget all these things God did for you in the past with the manna and the water from the rock and taking you safely through the desert with the fiery serpents and scorpions and getting you here safely.

Don't forget that it's God who did this. Don't say it's you. Don't say by my power of my heart, I've gained all this wealth.

That's exactly what Nebuchadnezzar said. You might remember that in Daniel chapter four. It's kind of interesting because it's an exact parallel to this statement and God's response to it.

Daniel four, verse 30, says the king spoke saying, is not this great Babylon that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for my for the honor of my majesty? It says, while the word was still in the king's mouth, the voice fell from heaven. King Nebuchadnezzar, to you, it is spoken. The kingdom has departed from you and they shall drive you from men and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.

They shall make you eat grass like the ox. Seven times shall pass over you until you know that most high rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever he chooses. And so that very hour, the word was fulfilled and Nebuchadnezzar became a madman.

It was because he was looking at his accomplishments. He had built Babylon. He really had.

And he began to boast in his heart about it. He said, hey, this is a great battle that I have built by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty. Well, God didn't even let a Babylonian ruler get away with that, much less his own people who had much less excuse for saying such a thing.

In Jeremiah eight, let me make sure you don't say that. Verse 18, he says, and you shall remember Yahweh, your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant, which he swore to your fathers this day. Now, of course, even though this is a statement made to Israel, this is a generic statement.

It's God who gives you the power to get wealth. For one thing, if we are wealthier people here in America than somewhere else, it's partly due to the fact that we live in a land that is capable of being productive. We don't live out in some desert where you don't have water, where you don't have good soil and so forth.

God has blessed us. And then, of course, he gives us the capability of going out and working, whether it's even just our health. Any one of us could be put out of work instantly if we simply were in an accident, got paralyzed from the neck down or were smitten with some kind of disease that's a crippling disease or became bedridden or died.

Any of those things could happen. Those things have not happened because God hasn't let them happen to us. And therefore, any ability we have to get wealth is because God has given us the power to do it.

He has not. He has not crippled us. He's not put us in a place where wealth cannot be gotten.

And therefore, whatever we have, we have to give him the credit that we have had the power to get it. We might have worked hard for it. We might labor hard and get wealthy as a result, but it's still he that gave us the power to do all that.

And it's wrong to begin to think by my power, my might, I've gained this wealth. God's jealous over his reputation. He doesn't like us taking credit for what he does.

Verse 19, Then it shall be if you by any means forget Yahweh your God and follow other gods and serve them and worship them. I testify against you this day that you are sure you shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so you shall perish because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord, your God.

Obviously, a recurring theme in the discourse. Chapter nine, Hero Israel, you are to cross over Jordan this day. I don't know if they actually went that day, but this day would mean this very day.

As I'm speaking, you are looking at the Jordan that you're going to cross over. You are very soon going to do so and going to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself. Cities great and fortified up to heaven, a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim whom you know and of whom you heard it said who can stand before the descendants of Anak.

Therefore, understand today that the Lord your God is he who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you. So you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly.

As the Lord has said to you, do not think in your heart after the Lord, your God has cast them out before you saying, because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me to the possession of this land. Now, he has said earlier that God did not choose them because they were a big nation in chapter seven, verse seven, and they shouldn't think that they were a big and impressive nation when God chose them. And now he tells in chapter eight, 17, they shouldn't think that they're successful because of their power and their might.

That's not it. And nor should they think that their righteousness is the reason for their success. It's not the size of the nation.

It's not their power and their might. It's not their righteousness. All of these things might

stand in as it were in the place of God for receiving the credit for what they do and get.

And it says, don't say that. Don't say because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me into the possession, but it's because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. So it's not God's favoritism toward Israel alone.

It is. It is also his contempt for the nations that are now ripe for judgment because they're so wicked. They have to be destroyed.

Whether Israel was around to do it or not, God would have to do this. And so he's using Israel and giving them the land of these people that he's destroying. It's because of the wickedness of those nations, not because of Israel's great righteousness.

It is not because of your righteousness or the righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go into possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord, your God drives them out from before you and that he may fulfill the word which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Therefore, understand that the Lord, your God, is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you're not righteous. You're a stiff necked people.

Remember and do not forget how you provoked the Lord, your God to wrath in the wilderness from the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place. You have been rebellious against the Lord. As in Horeb, you provoke the Lord to wrath so that the Lord was angry enough with you to have destroyed you.

When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord made with you. Then I stayed in the mountain 40 days and 40 nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.

Then the Lord delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God. And on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass at the end of 40 days and 40 nights that the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

Then the Lord said to me, arise, go down quickly from here for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded image.

Furthermore, the Lord spoke to me, saying, I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff neck people. Let me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.

So I turned and I came down from the mountain and the mountain burned with fire in the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands and I looked and there you had sinned

against Yahweh your God and made for yourself a molded calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way which Yahweh your God commanded you. Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes.

And I fell down before the Lord as at the first 40 days and 40 nights, I neither ate bread nor drank water because of all your sin, which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and the hot displeasure with which the Lord was angry with you to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me at that time also.

And the Lord was very angry with Aaron and would have destroyed him. So I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made and burned it with fire and crushed it into ground and ground it very small until it was as fine as dust.

And I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain. Also at Tabra and Masa and Kibra have you provoked the Lord to wrath. Likewise, when the Lord sent you from Kadesh Barnea saying, go up and possess the land which I have given you, then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and you did not believe him nor obey his voice.

You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. Thus, I prostrated myself before the Lord 40 days and 40 nights. I kept prostrating myself because the Lord had said he would destroy you.

Therefore, I prayed to the Lord and said, oh, Lord God, do not destroy your people and your inheritance, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Do not look on the stubbornness of this people or on their wickedness or their sin.

Lest you let the land from which you brought us should say because Yahweh was not able to bring them to the land which he promised them. And because he hated them, he has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness. Yet they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out by your mighty power and your outstretched arm.

Now, we're in the middle of Moses retelling these familiar stories. And the purpose of telling the story on this occasion is because he's warning them not to make the mistake of thinking that they somehow pleased God by their righteous behavior and therefore God decided to do these kind things for them. But rather, it's all grace.

That's the point he's making. That God is a God of grace. He's keeping a promise he made to their ancestors, but he's showing grace to them because of that promise he made.

And he's being faithful. As he said earlier, that he's a faithful God, he said in chapter

seven, verse nine. But he's a gracious God.

The grace that God shows to us today is because of his faithfulness to somebody that he made a promise to. Who was that? Jesus, actually. God made a promise to Jesus.

It's recorded in Psalm 2, where God said to Jesus, ask of me and I'll give you the nations for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession. Psalm 2, 8. So that promise that we, the nations, will be given to Jesus is being fulfilled by grace. It's not because we're righteous or because we deserve it.

It's because God made a promise to his son and he's fulfilling that promise, just like he made a similar promise to Abraham and fulfilled it by bringing his children, his offspring into a promised land. So God has made a promise to Jesus that the most parts of the earth will be his and that he will have all the nations for his inheritance. So we are them.

We're the nations. We're the ones being given to Jesus. And so it's not because of our righteousness that God does it.

It's grace toward us. It's faithfulness toward Jesus. You know, in 1 John 1, 9, it says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Well, it seems like it should say he is merciful and gracious to cleanse our sins and forgive us of our cleanses from all unrighteousness, but says he's faithful and just when God forgives us. It's true. He is being merciful in a sense to us, but he's being faithful and just to Jesus because Jesus purchased us and it would be unjust and unfaithful for God to let Jesus pay a price and not give him what he paid for.

And so our being forgiven by God, although it's a gracious act of God toward us, it's an act of justice and faithfulness on his part toward Christ who paid the price. You see, God doesn't owe us anything, but he owes Christ something. God didn't owe these children of Israel anything, but he owed something to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

That is, he owed it to them to keep a promise he made to them. And therefore, these people kind of are the beneficiaries of that, but not because of anything in themselves. That's what Moses wants to drive home to their understanding here.

And so he emphasizes again and again, you're a stiff necked. You've been rebellious from the very beginning. As long as I've known you from the day I met you, you've been rebellious and stubborn.

And he catalogs many of the cases, the golden calf, the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. He passed over rather quickly some of the other places where they murmured and got judged. And he points out that they would be dead today if not for Moses twice spending 40 days of fasting and on his face before God interceding for them.

Otherwise, they'd be dead today. So it was not their righteousness. Don't let them ever begin to feel that way, he says.

OK, he's in the middle of this recite recital of their history at the end of verse nine. But we're at the end of an hour, so we'll stop here and pick it up again when we come back.