

## Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)

### *The Lawgiver Urges Obedience*

Readings: *Deuteronomy 4:44-49; 5:1-5, 22-33; 6:1-25; 7:1-26; 8:1-20*

#### **Reflections:**

- This is a very important address from Moses and is rich with insights into the Law.
- The Lord has made a covenant and this covenant is based on law which is doomed to fail as we will see. Again, the Law is simply given as a diagnosis of the problem. It is not the cure.
- Moses says, “Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him.” We must remember that Moses appears to be a complete exception. He is modeling a higher way of relating to God. Everyone else who approaches God will die in judgment, only Moses is a friend. This is not because he is righteous but because he is humble and completely trusts God. He models to us the kind of relationship with God we have in Christ.
- Moses states, “Oh, that their hearts would be inclined.” This is the central issue with the human race and why the Law doesn’t work. Ezekiel and Jeremiah will prophecy the day when God will write the Law on our hearts and God will give us new hearts and put his spirit in us (see Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33-34; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:30-32; 36:25-27).
- The premier command of the Law is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. What do we see? It is all about love. The essence of the Law is not ultimately about moral perfection but about complete abandon and surrender to the love of God.
- God's blessing in the Promised Land is described as completely external. God’s blessing is symbolized as houses, vineyards, and possessions. In Christ, God’s blessings are internal. Eph. 1:3 states that God has “blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.”
- God’s jealousy again reinforces his unyielding love for his people.
- Moses gives the people the basic children’s curriculum. He prioritizes teaching children. We must remember that in the story of Israel that they were under law and therefore

they taught that righteousness was keeping the Law. In Christ, righteousness is living by faith and this is what we must teach our children.

- The Lord chose Israel because it was so small. Again God loves the humble but resists the proud. His judgment falls not on those who are trying and failing but on those who are proud, rebellious and trust in their own strength.
- God promises to fight for them and send an angel described as the “hornet” to drive out the nations. We do not have to take care of ourselves because God will make a way where there seems to be no way. He just wants us to trust him.
- They are to take the land “little by little”. This shows that the kingdom needs to grow into a space slowly rather than try to do things quickly. The wild animals are a symbol of Israel’s inability to fill and manage all that space. This is a good lesson for any growing and expanding movement or initiative.
- There are many warnings about worshipping other gods. We will see that the lure of self-centered religion will be a snare for Israel over and over.
- A key verse: “God led you all the way in the desert ...to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart. He...caused you to feel hunger and then feeding you with manna...to teach that we do not live by bread but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. God will provide manna and water for our needs but will still allow us to feel a hunger and thirst to make us dependent on every word he speaks. This is to train our hearts devotion on him so that we don't live independently but live in perpetual dependence and humility. God does promise to bless in the future and that one day we will “lack nothing.” Yet, he wants to hardwire our hearts for this dependence and humility so that when he does bless that we don't become self-sufficient and then drift away from him.