

1 When you come into the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, 2 that you shall take some of the first of all the fruits of the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place where Jehovah your God chooses to make His name abide. 3 And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to Jehovah your God that I have come to the country which Jehovah swore to our fathers to give us.' 4 Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of Jehovah your God. 5 And you shall answer and say before Jehovah your God: 'My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6 But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. 7 Then we cried out to Jehovah God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. 8 So Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9 He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey"; 10 and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O Jehovah, have given me.' Then you shall set it before Jehovah your God, and worship before Jehovah your God. 11 So you shall rejoice in every good thing which Jehovah your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you."

"Blessings and Curses"

We come this week to the focus of my short three-week journey through the Book of Deuteronomy.

Today is January 22nd, the day 39 years ago when the US Supreme Court overturned the abortion laws of all 50 states wrongly deciding and declaring that abortion would now be "legal" throughout all nine months of pregnancy in all our nation.

- Since that day somewhere around 53 million babies have lost their lives in what should be their precious sanctuary: The mother's womb

Today, as we do each year, we focus on this grievous sin of abortion calling down God's judgment in our singing and our prayers. BUT, as I have stressed over the past two weeks, we cannot just be against abortion: We must be for life, and not just human life, but the abundant life that Jesus came to give us!

I chose Deuteronomy because it was where the people of God were prepared to enter the Promised Land of Canaan after their deliverance from Egypt. We saw how God gave His people the proper vision of who they were and where they were to go:

- That He would be their God and they would be His people, living in a land He would give them.

We saw all of the precious laws and commandments that God gave them so they could enjoy the rich land He was graciously giving them.

- And finally as we will see today, He gave them severe warnings about the consequences of disobedience.

Here at Church of the King we include a vow to oppose the sin of abortion with our membership vows and regularly speak out against this sin in our land. There is no need with this congregation to dwell on the gruesome nature of this sin nor all of the depressing statistics. What we do need to remember is that it is no surprise to God that a nation founded on Christian principles and so richly blessed by Him could in the end sin in such a great way.

We saw in the text I read this morning how God outlined what His people needed to do to remain faithful.

of the land and to feast and celebrate before the God who had

instructions for the building of an altar and the writing of the Laws for all the people to see! The altar was to be made of stones untouched by human hands, reminding them that they could do nothing to earn their salvation, just as the tithes reminded them that ALL the possessions they now had were a gracious gift from God.

- Then to be sure they understood the consequences of obedience and disobedience, God gathers the tribes on two mountains on either side of a valley:

Deuteronomy 27:6 “You shall build with whole stones the altar of Jehovah your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to Jehovah your God. 7 You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before Jehovah your God. 1

11 And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, 12 "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; 13 and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

- In chapter 28 we are given the blessings and curses that are to be proclaimed from these mountains.

However before they are given Moses instructs the Levites to proclaim a list of curses unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice... If they were being given as a Facebook post or E-mail today they would be in ALL CAPS! What the Levites proclaim is a warning about what happens if we lose the vision that has been given:

- If we no longer desire to live as God’s people keeping the two great commandments to Love God and Love our neighbor.

We should see how all of these curses relate to those two great commands and how they apply to us today!

- We must with the people of Israel say AMEN to each of these.

As was the case with the nation of Israel and many nations since, the root problem is always idolatry...

15 'Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.'

- This would have brought to their remembrance their great sin at Sinai where they fashioned a golden calf from their jewelry and Aaron declared “these be thy gods, O Israel which brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

We do not have such golden statues today in all of our modern sophistication: We have something more like a pair of dice representing the theory of evolution that our scientists tell us brought man up from the mud and mire!

- Let me assure you that the sin of abortion will not be cast from our land as long as we keep such idols in our high places!

Moving on from the first four Commandments the Levites then turn to the fifth commandment:

16 'Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.

- We have done this not only as individuals, but our media and entertainment industries have been on the rampage against parents, especially fathers, for many decades.

17 'Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.

- Reminding us not to steal!

to wander off the road.

to be due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.

to not bear false witness or covet, reminding us that we are to

- The Levites then proclaim various curses on sexual sins which we have seen come forth from the sexual revolutions of the 20th Century.

20 'Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.

21 'Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal.

22 'Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.

23 'Cursed is the one who lies with his mother-in-law.

- Then come two curses that deal with the prohibition against murder which should clearly remind us of the sin of abortion in our land...

24 'Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.

25 'Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.

The latest pills now allow a woman to kill her unborn child in the privacy of her own home and there are many abortionists more than willing to slay an innocent person for a fee.

And finally we have the summary in verse 26: 'Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Moses then declares, "'Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of Jehovah your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that Jehovah your God will set you high above all nations of the earth."

If you think back to the simple illustration I used last week about the backyard that was graciously given to the children with that protective fence around it, we again have a picture of what Moses is saying here. Faithful children who heed the boundaries established by the fence are able to fully enjoy all they have been given in that glorious backyard and become the envy of all the other neighborhood children who will soon want to come and play there as well.

- In the remainder of chapter 28 Moses goes on to give the complete list of blessings and curses that are to be proclaimed by the tribes on those two mountains.

I am not going to read the long list of blessings and curses, but will leave that for some of your homework! As an encouragement for further study I will remind you that there are thirteen verses giving the blessings and 54 verses of additional curses. This should serve as a sobering reminder of the sinfulness of our sin! I have also included a comparison of the blessings with some of the curses so you can see that there are many parallels and I hope it leads to many interesting discussions.

- These are God's precious promises and we should choose wisely!

In chapters 29-31, Moses reminds people of the vision that God has for them, gives a promise of restoration for after they fail and commissions Joshua as their new leader to take them into the land.

In chapter 32 we come to a lengthy song that is spoken by Moses which does not get a lot of attention... You see God knows the heart of His people and the failures that lay ahead so it is not an easy song to hear:

- But it does end with great hope and I believe it is very appropriate for our nation today!

Chapter 31: "26 "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside
me, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27 for I know
while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious
against my death? 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and
stand in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against
them. 29 For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way
which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the
sight of Jehovah, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." 30 Then Moses spoke in the
hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:" *[as I read the words of
this song for our ears, consider the implications for us today!]*

Deuteronomy 32:1

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; & hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 Let my teaching drop
as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the tender herb, And as showers on the
grass. 3 For I proclaim the name of Jehovah: Ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is
perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.
5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and
crooked generation. 6 Do you thus deal with Jehovah, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your
Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you? 7 "Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they
will tell you: 8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons
of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. 9 For
Jehovah's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. 10 "He found him in a desert land
And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the
apple of His eye. 11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking
them up, Carrying them on its wings, 12 So Jehovah alone led him, & there was no foreign god with
him. 13 "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He
made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock; 14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of
the flock, With fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And
you drank wine, the blood of the grapes. 15 "But Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked; You grew fat,
you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock
of his salvation. 16 They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked
Him to anger. 17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, To new gods, new
arrivals That your fathers did not fear. 18 Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, And have
forgotten the God who fathered you. 19 "And when Jehovah saw it, He spurned them, Because of the
provocation of His sons and His daughters. 20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see
what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith. 21 They have
provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols.
But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish
nation. 22 For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth
with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23 'I will heap disasters on them; I
will spend My arrows on them. 24 They shall be wasted with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter
destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust.
25 The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within For the young man and virgin, The
nursing child with the man of gray hairs.
26 I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among
men," 27 Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, Lest their adversaries should misunderstand, Lest
they should say, "Our hand is high; And it is not Jehovah who has done all this." ' 28 "For they are a
nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them. 29 Oh, that they were wise, that they
understood this, That they would consider their latter end! 30 How could one chase a thousand, And two

had sold them, And Jehovah had surrendered them? 31 For
emies themselves being judges. 32 For their vine is of the vine
their grapes are grapes of gall, Their clusters are
s, And the cruel venom of cobras. 34 'Is this not laid up in
es? 35 Vengeance is Mine, & recompense; Their foot shall
slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon
them.' 36 "For Jehovah will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that
their power is gone, And there is no one remaining, bond or free. 37 He will say: 'Where are their gods,
The rock in which they sought refuge? 38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, And drank the wine of their
drink offering? Let them rise and help you, And be your refuge. 39 'Now see that I, even I, am He, And
there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver
from My hand. 40 For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, "As I live forever, 41 If I whet My glittering
sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those
who hate Me. 42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh, With the
blood of the slain and the captives, From the heads of the leaders of the enemy." ' 43 "Rejoice, O
Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His
adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people."

44 So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the
people. 45 Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 and He said to them: "Set your hearts
on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful
to observe--all the words of this law. 47 For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by
this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

- These should have been very sobering words to be heard by God's people then AND sobering words for God's people hear today in America!

I had hoped to include the prophecies of Habakkuk in the message this morning, but that will have to be left for another time. I do think that the Prophet's final prayer is appropriate as we consider what Moses proclaimed to God's people and how it applies to where we are today in America...

3:2 "O Jehovah, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O Jehovah, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy... 16 When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops. 17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- 18 Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 Jehovah God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills."

Our nation has engaged in all the sins of Israel that Moses had predicted and Habakkuk decried.

The song that Moses left with God's people cannot be considered very encouraging or joyful.

But I hope you can see that they are a proper meditation concerning the sins we observe and denounce in our land today...

- So is all lost?
- What is our response to be?
- Moses & Habakkuk say we can hope and pray for God's mercy.

We see examples in the Scriptures where God's people in the Kingdom of Judah as well as the Gentiles turn from their sin with great repentance followed by a great revival!

ings Josiah and Hezekiah were convicted by God's Law and
Even the evil King of Nineveh turned in repentance when
ays to live because of their wickedness.

al & turned away His wrath.

I am certainly not a prophet and cannot tell you what the future holds for the United States.

We know that we have forgotten God and His law: We have turned to the idols of evolution and science, we have sacrificed our children at the offices of Planned Parenthood hoping that these 'choices' would bring us better lives, just as those of old looked to Moloch for help when placing their children on his heated hands as a sacrifice.

- How God will bring judgment is not for us to know at this time!

We must heed what Moses told the people just before his song:

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to Jehovah our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

- What we must always remember is that God has promised to be our God and to make us His people!
- We have forgiveness and salvation only in Jesus!

We must remember that God has revealed His precious laws and commandments that we might have true life and be His witness to all the world: Remembering again those challenging words of Jesus, "if you love me keep my commandments!" Next week we will return to our study of the Book of Acts... There we should again be encouraged by the fact that the Holy Spirit is filling the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus!

- There were certainly rough spots for God's people as history moved from the calling of Abraham to the coming of Jesus as the promised Messiah.
- It should certainly not surprise us, nor discourage us, when we see many rough spots in the advance of the Kingdom from the time that Jesus ascended to the Father's right-hand until the time that all the nations of the earth are put under His feet!

Communion Meditation:

Jeremiah 29 " 3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying, 4 "Thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters--that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.