

Deuteronomy 9:1 - 10:11

*Know what you are ...
Know what you need*
Questions for Groups

A.. Know what you are Deuteronomy 9:1-24

- 1.What would the Israelites be tempted to think about themselves and others after entering the promised land? v. 4
- 2.How are we tempted in the same way? What does it look like in our lives?
- 3.Why is this such an easy temptation to fall into?
- 4.What, in fact, was the reality for Israel and what is it for us?
- 5.Given our tendency to pride, how can we remember 'what we are'?
- 6.In what ways would remembering 'what we are' help us in our relationship with God?
- 7.In what ways would remembering 'what we are' help in our relationships with others?

Know what you need Deuteronomy 9:25-29

- 8.What is it we need?
- 9.How can we come to see just what we need and how much we need it?
- 10.In what ways is the reality of 1 John 2:1-2 and Hebrews 7:25 an encouragement to us?
- 11.'Repentance is the central act of the Christian life.'
What does it mean to repent?
What have we learned that will help us to make repentance more a part of our daily lives?
- 12.What does Moses' prayer teach us about how we should pray?



St. Swithun's House groups

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Context

The people of Israel are about to enter the land which God is giving them *as a gift of his grace*.

Moses is teaching the people to prepare them for how to live in the land. Their self-understanding is all-important.

They are not being given the land because they are *superior* to other nations:

neither numerically (7:7); nor materially (8:17).

1.Know what you are Deuteronomy 9:1-24

9:1-3 Grace

Possession of the land *as a gift of God's grace* is emphasised again.

9:4-6 Grace undeserved

The people of Israel are not *morally* superior to the other nations either.

Three times Moses makes the same point *about Israel*: v.4; v.5; v.6.

It is Israel that is the focus of attention in these verses, not the other nations.

The conclusion is reached in v.6b.

It is a humbling one: there is no difference between Israel and the 'wicked' nations!

9:7-24 Grace undeserved - the proof

Israel has been rebellious against God from the moment he rescued them from slavery to Egypt.

v.7

Verse 7 summarizes the rebelliousness of Israel over forty years from the moment they left Egypt to their arrival at the promised land.

(cf. Exodus 14:11; 15:24; 16:2)

vv.8-24

Rebelliousness at Mount Sinai - the clearest example of what the people of Israel are.

v.8 summarizes all that is to follow in vv.9-24

Note the ominous use of the verb 'destroy' (cf. v.19), already used in v.3 of the nations soon to be judged by God for their wickedness.

vv.9-11 God's holy grace

The emphasis is on God's gracious gift of his holy law:

'gracious' in that, uniquely in the Bible, God spoke the law *directly to the people*; gracious' in that, uniquely, God himself wrote the 10

Commandments with his finger 'holy' in that he spoke these words 'out of the fire' (cf. Exodus 19:18-19)

v.12 Israel's wickedness

The shattering contrast between God's holy grace and Israel's sinful rebelliousness in idolatry.

vv.13-14 Judgment threatened.

The Lord threatens to repudiate the covenant (notice the significance of the pronouns in v.12a!), to destroy the people and to start again with Moses.

vv.15-17 Israel's wickedness - judgment looms

The tension mounts as the prospect of the end of the covenant looms still larger in v.17.

vv. 18-21 Judgment averted - Moses' intercession

Note the seriousness of Israel's sin (v.18b)

the reality of God's holy anger (v.19)

the comprehensiveness of the people's sin - from the high priest down

the earnestness of Moses' prayer (v.18a)

the effectiveness of his intercession (v.19b)

his total repudiation of the people's sin (v.21).

vv.22-24 The persistence of Israel's wickedness

In case anyone thought Israel had just had a bad day, Moses lists example after example of their rebelliousness:

Taberah - Numbers 11:1-3;

Massah - Exodus 17:1-7;

Kibroth Hattaavah - Numbers 11:34

Kadesh Barnea - Numbers 14:1ff

v.24 is the devastating and unavoidable conclusion:

a people who have been the undeserving recipients of grace upon grace have consistently responded with wickedness and rebellion.

2.

Know what you need

Deuteronomy 9:25 - 10:11

9:25-29

Moses' intercession

When the events being recalled in Deuteronomy 9 actually took place Moses interceded with God *before* he went back down the mountain and discovered for himself what the people had done.

In retelling the account, Moses delays the record of his intercession until now.

This is (i) to heighten the sense of the seriousness of what Israel had done and the very real prospect that God's judgment would fall upon them; and (ii) to draw attention to his intercession how that he turns to it.

Moses' prayer is based on what God has revealed of himself - that he is the God of the covenant.

(i) note the pronouns used in v.26 and v.29 and compare them with those used by God in v.12a;

(ii) note Moses' appeal to God to remember Abraham (v.27), the one to whom the covenant promise was first made;

(iii) note Moses' appeal to the reputation of God in v.28. God brought Israel out of Egypt in order that the world may know that he *is* the LORD (cf. Exodus 7:5)

10:1-11

The result of Moses' intercession

10:1-5

The covenant reaffirmed

God writes the 10 Commandments on two new tablets and instructs Moses to put them in the ark which will accompany Israel wherever they go. This act signifies God's continuing commitment to his people, to be their God.

10:6-9

The journey re-started

The journey to the promised land begins again. Despite his sin, on his death Aaron is replaced as high priest by his son, Eleazar. Both these acts signify God's continuing commitment to his people, to be their God.

10:10-11

The result of Moses intercession

These verses make clear the link between Moses' intercession and God's decision not to destroy his people but to remain in covenant commitment to them.

Conclusion

The message of the chapter is that Israel is no different from all the other nations. They are wicked at heart, rebellious against God and deserve only judgment. (If anything, they are worse, because they are the recipients of God's revelation and grace and should know better).