Thursday Bible Law Class **Deuteronomy 9**

Hear O Israel 4th June 26



Moses continues to recount to the nation of their recent history, and in this particular chapter reminds them of recent incidents in which they proved how dependant they were upon the gracious protection of the Lord God of their fathers. That they did not deserve to go into the land of promises because of their own righteousness but because of the Covenant God had made. Moss reminds them of their own default position of faithlessness, and it was something that they needed to work on and improve.

They were about to be permitted to enter the land. The chapter begins with an exclamation: Hear O Israel.

This would have made the nation pay particular attention, and listen very carefully. They would immediately associate the words Hear O Israel with words which Moses had spoken to them only lately: 6:4-5: *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:*

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. This singular command repeated and endorsed by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God himself no less, was indeed remembered by the people (although sadly not practiced.) Even today it is the last words a devout Jew will say on his death bed. That aside, Israel would have snapped to attention when those words rang out around the foothills of the mountains of Moab.

They would have jostled for a better position to hear, when they heard the next words: *Thou art to pass over Jordan this day*... the crossing into the land, that they would have been told about by their mothers and fathdrs for so many years, as they wandered around the barraen landscape of the Arava and the Negev, the waste howlinhg wilderness. That Jordan seemed so far away, but here they were, they could even see it in the distance.

Moses continued... *to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!*

Ooh, wasn't that the basic message of the evil report brough back by the ten faithless spies who were so negative, wasn't that report the one which made the hearts of the people melt? By now the new generation would have heard all about those fortified redoubts, the garrisoned cities, the militant nature of the tribes of the promised land of Canaan.

The Anakim were a formidable race of warlike people of formidable appearance, of well above average height, who occupied the lands of southern Israel near Hebron. The name 'Anakim' in Hebrew most likely means 'long-necked' or tall. Their ancestry is been traced back to Anak, the son of Arba (Joshua

15:13; 21:11), who at that time was regarded as the *greatest man among the Anakim*. (Joshua 14:15). The reaction of the chosen representatives of Israel when meeting these huge warriors was: *we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them*. (Numbers 13:33). Interestingly, 'The Egyptian Execration' texts of the Middle Kingdom (hieroglyphic tablets found in Egypt) dating from 2055–1650 BC) mention a list of political enemies in Canaan, and among this list are a group called the "ly Anaq" or people of Anaq. As Joshua and Caleb scoffed loudly at these reports, and gave a completely different – and accurate version – it seems that the cowardly and faithless attitude of the ten spies was an exaggeration for effect. This is a habit which is used greatly by people in every walk of life. It is a form of lying. Exaggerating for effect to deceive deliberately for personal gain is sinful. (Not all exaggeration is wrong, it is the context and motivation which determines).

Despite this, the name Anakim, still had the power to cause a feeling of trepidation even a generation later. Those fortified cities which seemed so hard to conquer, another anxiety – but Moses made it absolutely clear, that such barriers were nothing to God.

The next sentences of Moses show great emphasis:

- the Lord thy God is **he** which goeth over before thee;
- as a consuming fire **he** shall destroy them,
- and **he** shall bring them down before thy face:
- so shalt thou drive them out,
- and destroy them quickly,
- as the Lord hath said unto thee.

God would do it. As He said in the first place. The key piece of information the ten weak-kneed spies seemed to have forgotten. God would do it. But not all – the fiery fierce tribes of the land would be so weakened by the hand of God, that Israel would be

kindly given the easy final task of driving, and destroying them – quickly. A simple solution – which would be provided – seemingly from no where – if they had sufficient faith – just as the water had gushed from the Rock, just as manna had fallen from heaven. All Israel had to do was trust, believe and act accordingly.

After building up this grand picture of promised of victory

Moses immediately cuts to the core of the message:

Don't think that when all this great victory and conquest has been undertaken by God on your behalf, that you can take all the credit, and think its because you're the special ones, and your better than everyone else!

No – its because *of the wickedness of these nations that God would drive them out*, and not because you are all so good and wonderful, but it is because God always honours His Promises – and that *which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

Moses reminded them of their history, that they had a national characteristic fault:

Being stiff necked.

A metaphor for stubbornness, pride, and an unwillingness to submit to God's will. It has been suggested that the phrase originates from an ancient farming practice. When a farmer used oxen to plough a field, the animals were guided by a yoke. If an ox was defiant and refused to turn or follow the path the farmer directed, its neck would lock up and resist the nudge of the ox-goad. Because this animal was literally "hard of neck," farmers used the term to describe a beast that was completely unteachable and useless for work. Read Hosea 10:11-13.

He catalogues their failures:

- How they provoked God in the wilderness, from the beginning of the journey to the end,
- How they provoked God even at the place they received their law- at Horeb
- They provoked God at Taberah
- They provoked God at Massah
- They provoked God at Kibrothhattaavah

One moment in particular seemed to sum up their stiff-necked attitude.

Moses describes how he ascended the Mount Horeb to receive the law, - after fasting from eating – and even drinking! For forty days and nights. (reminiscent of the temptations of the Lord Jesus) After receiving the law he was instructed to hurry back down the mount, to confront the nation who had corrupted themselves by worshipping a molten image – A calf in fact.

A calf which was made of solid metal, and definitely was unable to move its neck!

So the nation was equated with the very calf they worshipped:

Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

The molten image had to be destroyed, and so also the sinful characteristic which it so reflected.

Moses reminded the nation how they were all collectively condemned by this national sin. Deserving of death.

14 *Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.*

Moses further described to his audience how he took the two tables of stone he was carrying, and threw them forcefully to the ground, as the nation had broken their covenant with God. Moses then explained that for their sakes he went a further forty days and nights depriving himself of water and food for forty days, - putting himself in the jaws of death, to signify he was willing to die for these his people. He was a mediator for his people, a type of the Saviour to come, who sacrificed himself for his people, and who prostrated his own life, depriving himself for the sake of others. He didn't break tables of stone, but broke his will, and submitted to the hands of wicked men who broke his body. He (Hebrews 8:7,10:9) in himself replaced the law written on stone. As the Lord hearkened to Moses, 9:19, so God accepted the pure sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the Advocate for his people.

Moses explained how he destroyed the golden calf, reducing it to dust, and made them drink water with the dust in it. They had to confront their own sin and own it!

Moses concluded this small part of his speech (and this chapter) by reminding them of his own personal intercession, his prayer on their behalf, pleading with God, to spare His inheritance, to have mercy on those He had redeemed, to respect the Promise made to the fathers, not to look at the rebellious sins, because God had made them His own.

The gracious, and thoughtful prayer, shows Moses the meekest man who ever lived, who spoke face to face with God as a man speaks with a friend, was such a noble character, foreshadowing the One to come in so many ways. But even in this, it reflects upon God who actually raised up Moses in the first place to lead His people, and would likewise raise up One like unto Moses to save His people from their sins.

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