

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

### "BEARING THE BURDEN OF GOD'S BELOVED"

For individual study or group discussion

Continuing our studies in Deuteronomy, Moses begins by recounting how God blessed the children of Israel by fulfilling the promises he made to the Patriarchs in Genesis (22:17, 26:4). As a result, Moses recognizes the need for leadership structure, because the Israelites had become as "numerous as the stars of heaven" (v. 10).

**1. Bearing the burdens of God's beloved people calls for leadership that is shared and delegated (vv. 9-14).**

As the Israelite population grew, so did the burden to govern them. Inherent within governing an expanding populace is the adjudication of disputes as they arise (v.12). Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper reiterated the need for shared and delegated leadership in our churches today, because sin is a fundamental problem in human life. That's what makes the church essential. It was designed to address the burden of sin. Anyone who does not see the need for organized religion, probably also does not believe in the depravity of man. If you know the reality of the burden of sin, then you should see the need for the church.<sup>1</sup>

- In verse 8, Moses alludes to the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 22:17. What added burden came from the Abrahamic blessing?
- In verse 12, Moses asks, "How can I bear by myself the weight and burden of you and your strife?" What three graphic words does Moses use to remind us of the wilderness narrative and the sins of the murmuring Israelites?

**2. Bearing the burdens of God's beloved people calls for leadership that is wise and godly (vv. 15-18).**

As the children of Israel enter Canaan, the need for good rulers who are wise, understanding, and experienced is crucial (v. 13). In Exodus 18:14-27, Moses listened to Jethro's advice and initiated a call for representation from among the respected leaders of the tribes. The leaders who would share the burden of delegation of responsibility to decide disputes with Moses were trustworthy men, chosen by the people. According to John Calvin, if even a tireless leader like Moses strained to fulfill his duties, magistrates and pastors should take note: "Here, too, it is worthwhile to remark, that no single mortal can be sufficient to do everything, however many and various may be the endowments wherein he excels. For who shall equal Moses, whom we have still seen to be unequal to the burden, when he undertook the whole care of governing the people? Let then, God's servants learn to measure carefully their powers, lest they should wear out, by ambitiously embracing too many occupations."<sup>2</sup>

- What criteria did Moses use for choosing elders/judges in the Israelite camp? (See Deuteronomy 1:13; Exodus 18:21.)
- What guidelines did Moses use in mediating disputes? (Deuteronomy 1:16-17; Exodus 18:16)
- In Exodus 18:22, Jethro states the positive motive for Moses sharing arbitration responsibility. But Jethro goes further in v. 23 saying, "if you do this" (i.e., organize yourselves so that the Word of God is central in your life, the lives of the leaders, and the lives of the people), other things will happen. What are those things, and how are they similar to the promises of Psalm 1:1-3 and Jeremiah 17:5-8?
- Read Proverbs 11:14. Scripture teaches that there is safety within an abundance of wise counselors. We know that large numbers of advisors will not ensure success. What is the key to good leadership that is reiterated throughout Proverbs? (See also Proverbs 1:7; 9:10.)

DATE: July 10, 2022

SPEAKER: Chad/Brian

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 1:9-18

## Family Dinner Table

In Joshua 24, we read about one of Israel's wise and godly leaders. Near the end of his life, Joshua gathers "all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel" (v. 1) for a covenant renewal ceremony. During this corporate worship service, he reminds the people of God's covenant faithfulness as he outlines the history of Israel throughout the generations, from Abraham to Moses. Joshua narrates the story of God calling Abraham out of a pagan land and promising to bless him, telling how God delivers the people of Israel from their enemies and leads them into "a land flowing with milk and honey." Joshua then calls upon the children of Israel to repent and turn from other gods, fearing the one, true God and faithfully serving only him. In true leadership fashion, Joshua sets the example by renewing his commitment to the God of Israel first before the congregation by stating, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." At this point, he summarily writes down the laws of God and sets up a stone to be a witness against the Israelites, in case they break their covenant vows to God (vv. 15-27).

- Why are remembering and renewal important aspects of Christian worship?
- Covenant renewal and commitments are the fruit of our dialogue with God. What kind of responses are required by us as we gather to worship each Sunday?
- For further study, read Heidelberg Catechism, Questions & Answers 86-91.

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Tennessee Valley Presbytery,  
denominational partner ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Janet and Peter, supported  
missionary partners serving in a  
sensitive area, engaging unreached  
people groups and operating a business  
to serve their community.

<sup>1</sup>Kuyper, Abraham. *Rooted & Grounded: The Church as Organism and Institution*. Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library Press, 2013. 20

<sup>2</sup>Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries, Volume II*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1979. 303