

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“WHAT DOES COVENANT RENEWAL REQUIRE?” (PART 2)

For individual study or group discussion

Spanish poet and philosopher George Santayana penned, “Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.” Moses’ purpose for reviewing the history of Israel on the plains of Moab was to warn the second generation not to make the same mistakes as the first.

If you recall from our study of Deuteronomy 1:19-33 last week, Moses called on the children of Israel to renew their covenant with Jehovah by remembering their rebellion (vv. 19-28) while at the same time remembering God’s faithfulness to his promises (vv. 29-33). In today’s passage, Moses instructs the people that *covenant renewal requires remembering that their disobedience (vv. 34-40), as well as the temptation to presume upon God (vv. 41-46), has consequences.*

- Why is remembrance an important part of covenantal renewal? (See Deuteronomy 8, Psalm 143:5, Isaiah 46:9, and Luke 22:19.)
- In the book of Hebrews, the author reflects upon many important instances in the life of God’s people who rebelled against him, thus not entering the Promised Land. Read Hebrews 3:7-19. What warnings does the church need to heed today? How does remembering God’s goodness lead to faithfulness?

Life in the wilderness was supposed to be a response of faith and obedience to a God who had graciously acted to redeem the Israelites out of slavery, leading them into a land that “flows with milk and honey” (Numbers 13:27). But instead of trusting God’s word, the first generation, who had repeatedly witnessed God’s deliverance, disobeyed in stubborn unbelief. Numbers 13:33 recounts that the Israelites cited the vulnerability of their children as one excuse not to enter the land of Canaan (cf. Numbers 14:3). Ironically, God then promised that it would be the younger generation, along with Joshua and Caleb, who would inherit the Promised Land in their stead (vv. 36-39).

- Review Deuteronomy 1:19-46 and make a list of the heart attitudes that typified the first generation on the plains of Moab. What kind of lessons do you think this new generation learned after listening to Moses recount the disobedience of their parents? (See also Joshua 24:1-28.)
- What are ways we can help lead our children and encourage others to be faithful? (Deuteronomy 4:9-10 and 6:4-9)

As God pronounces the judgement to turn back into the wilderness, out of fear the people quickly repent and say they will “go up and fight” (v. 41). On the surface, it appears to be true repentance on their part, but it was presumptuous of them to expect God’s blessing. The Israelites soon learn that an attempt to take the land of Canaan without God fighting the battle for them was futile (v. 44).

- The thought of returning to an inhospitable wilderness was unbearable for the Israelites as the door to the Promised Land was slammed shut before them. Refer to verse 43 and list the words that describe their disobedience.
- Although chastised, God assured the Israelites he would fulfill his promises (v. 39). Read the following passage from *Divine Chastisement*, by A.W. Pink, and describe the difference between chastisement and punishment. How can knowing the difference bring you comfort as a child of God?

It is of first importance that we learn to draw a sharp distinction between Divine punishment and Divine chastisement: important for maintaining the honour and glory of God, and for the peace of mind of the Christian. The distinction is very simple, yet it is often lost sight of. God’s people can never by any possibility be punished for their sins, for God has already punished them at the Cross. Oftentimes God’s chastenings instead of being retributive are corrective. They are sent to empty us of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness: they are given to discover to us hidden transgressions, and to teach us the plague of our own hearts. Or again, chastisements are sent to strengthen our faith, to raise us to higher levels of experience, to bring us into a condition of usefulness. Still again, Divine chastisement is sent as a preventative, to keep under pride, to save us from being unduly elated over success in God’s service.¹

DATE: July 24, 2022

SPEAKER: Wil/Frank

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 1:34-46

Family Dinner Table

The church today needs to be reminded of her unbelief and past errors. Such reminders and knowledge of previous errors assist the church to withstand similar obstacles when they arise.

Examples of remembering the past can be seen in the church’s practice of the recitation of confessions and creeds. By calling councils to combat false teaching, the early church had fought heresies that arose within her doors.

The following origin story of the *Gloria Patri* details the history when the fourth century church stood at crossroads concerning the deity of Christ:

In the fourth century, the church faced a serious crisis with respect to the deity of Christ. The Arian heretics denied the deity of Christ, claiming that Jesus was a creature who was adopted into a special relationship with God. In their controversy with orthodox Christians, they used ribald and derogatory songs as a method of propaganda.

In response to the Arian attacks, the orthodox Christians composed their own songs, one of which was the Gloria Patri. Note the words of this well-known song:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

In its inception, the Gloria Patri functioned as a type of fight song, a rallying cry for orthodox Christianity. That original function has been lost through the passing of time so that it is now used as a liturgical response.²

- Recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4, the *Shema* was recited in order to ground Israel’s identity in the identity of God himself. Read 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:16, and Phil 2:5-11. What creed-like qualities do these passages have, and of what is Paul reminding the church in these statements?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at Carson Newman, Rev. Chandler Rowlen, denominational partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Maggie & Jonathan, supported missionary partners in the Asia-Pacific region, planting reformed and Presbyterian churches

¹Pink, A.W. *Comfort for Christians*, Chapter 7, Divine Chastisement. 1952. <https://www.monergism.com/distinction-between-god%E2%80%99s-punishment-and-god%E2%80%99s-discipline>. July 19, 2022.

²Sproul, R.C. *Accepting His Deity*. TableTalk Magazine. May 14, 2009. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/accepting-his-deity>. July 18, 2022.