

Deuteronomy 7:1-11

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[0 : 0 0] Deuteronomy chapter 7 verses 1 through 11 will be our text this evening. Deuteronomy chapter 7 verses 1 through 11. Just so as not to bring the spirit of the evening down and to make it one of doom and gloom.

In case you have not heard, Carrie and I get to be grandparents tomorrow. So you continue to be in prayer for us. I mean, you may want to be in prayer for Hunter and Jacey as well. But it's really about us, right? We're the ones getting to be the grandparents.

You know, I mean, yeah, Hunter probably has those dad nerves that are about to kick in real bad and all that good stuff. But, you know, we've known enough of you grandparents.

We realize it's about you. So we get to join your club. So it's going to be an exciting day for us. But no, do seriously be in prayer for them and lift them up.

So we're excited about that as well. So Deuteronomy chapter 7, starting in verse 1 and we're going to go down to verse 11. We're just making our way through the Old Testament and in particular making our way through the book of Deuteronomy.

[1 : 0 0] If you remember, Moses is preaching this final message before God's people enter into the promised land. I always wanted to set that in context. They're right there on Jordan's banks, literally on Jordan's stormy banks they stand.

They're casting a wish while they're about to literally go into the promised land. God is preparing them with an understanding of who he is, who they are in him, in relationship to their covenant that they enjoy with him, who they're going to be.

I mean, all these things are important because he is expounding the law. He is making clear God's expectation because here's the reality. Who he is and who they are in relation to him through their covenant will dictate how they live.

It will dictate what it looks like over there. And one thing that we've seen that is abundantly clear is that God was calling them to stand out for his recognition.

He was calling them to declare his worthiness, his praise. We'll see that this evening, to exalt who he is among the world, among the people of the world.

[2 : 1 2] Right? And we'll see in Deuteronomy 7, verses 1 through 11, not only has he called them to promote, to be the billboard that the world needs to see what God looks like.

Not only has he called them to show the world that's looking, that's going to look, that will look, that will be drawn to him. Because he just makes it clear people are going to ask questions.

People are going to want to know why you act this way. And you'll have opportunity. You'll see this evening, they will also be people living among people. But our title this evening would be the set-apart people of God.

Because while they are going in there, he is setting them apart. Okay, they were never to become one with. They did become one with.

And that got them in trouble. Right? We know historically. Some of you know I started back to school. And the last couple weeks I studied Isaiah and Jeremiah.

[3 : 12] And it doesn't take very long to study those two books of prophecy to realize the great judgment God had against his people. It was they became one with the people they were living among.

They were never called to be there. They were to be set apart, to be different. And we see that emphasized here. So Deuteronomy declares for us God's expectations and standard for his people.

So Moses here is preaching this message. And he writes for us to read what he declared to them publicly. It says,

Do you see here?

The emphasis is on because of who he is and who they are in covenant relationship to them. It will dictate how they behave. We've said that over and over again throughout scripture. And it's not a repeating song.

[5 : 39] It's not just a skipping record. It's just this constant theme that we find in scripture. No matter where we open it at. That because of who you are in Christ. In covenant relationship with the holy God.

Your life will look different. And what he declares to them here is you're going in. And sure, God's whole purpose for bringing them in was to draw others to him.

Right? It was to draw the world. He chose Abram out of the land of the Chaldeans. And made for him a nation. A multitude of people.

So that people would be drawn to him. This was his whole purpose. He wasn't just picking and choosing. And this guy looks good. I'll take him. His whole purpose was to draw people to him.

Noah built an ark for 120 years. So that people would have the opportunity to respond. Right? He was a preacher of righteousness. For 120 years nobody responded. You know. And hard ministry is good I guess.

[6 : 36] And you have all this stuff that God put somebody there to draw people in. And this is what he's doing. But he cautions them here in this passage and says.

Just because your purpose for existing was to draw people in. It doesn't mean you're going to look like them. It doesn't mean you're going to look like them. Right? You're going to be set apart. Because we've seen this.

It's this double-edged sword. It's this reality that we understand. If all God wanted was a people that would praise him. Then it would be a lot easier for God to take these people. And to leave them in the wilderness.

He could feed them there. He could provide for them there. Right? God has no problem giving them quail to eat. He has no problem giving them manna to eat. He has no problem bringing water from a rock. Even when it looks desolate and desert.

He has no problem taking care of them. For 40 years he provided for his people in the wilderness. God can provide for his people wherever they're at. And if all God wanted. Was a group of people that would just stand around and praise him.

[7 : 32] It would have been much easier for him to leave them in the wilderness. Where nobody else bothered him. But what God wanted was to take these people who were praising him. And put them in the midst. Or amongst other people.

So that other people would be drawn to him. Now there's the problem. Because it's easy to praise him in isolation. It's hard to live set apart.

In a great body of diversity. It's hard to stand out. And this is what God is declaring. You will be a set apart people.

We have three areas in this passage tonight. Before us. That sets them apart. And why they should be a set apart people. The first one almost seems like a repetition of the title.

But it's that way. We see this. There's separation from all others. There's separation from all others. Moses here tells them. And we get excited about this.

[8 : 33] Because Moses doesn't speak or proclaim with a longing. Or a desiring. But rather he declares with an expectation.

That God is going to do what he says he's going to do. I think one of the things that is missing from modern day church. Is I don't think that. Now I have to be cautious here.

Okay. Because I don't want you to think that I'm excluding myself from this. And I don't want you to think that I'm trying to cast stones. Because I'm living amongst it. Right. I'm part of the modern day church. So really what happens in the pews.

Is a direct result of what's going on in the pulpit. So the first stone that's got to be thrown. Has got to be thrown at the pulpit. Which is me. All right. So we understand this. But I think one of the great despairing things of the modern day church.

Is we really don't expect God to do all that he said he's going to do. We don't live with an expectation. We hope God picks up where we leave off. Rather than saying God is going to do everything he says he's going to do.

[9 : 38] Moses is declaring with this expectation that God is going to bring you in. He's going to displace seven nations greater and mightier than you.

He's going to displace people who are so much more skilled at warfare than you. He's going to destroy these fortified cities and these giants. And he's going to do all this. And he's going to put you right in the middle of them.

He's going to put you in the middle of their land. And he says but be careful when you get there. Okay. Be careful. Because if your whole adult life essentially has been spent in the wilderness wandering around.

And all of a sudden you're introduced to these magnificent cities. And you say hey these people over here have it going on. Right. They seem to know what they're doing. Look at their wells.

Look at their gardens. Look at their. It's a land flowing with milk and honey. That is really just a biblical word. Say it's a land lush with produce. I mean the produce from the land had to be carried between two guys.

[10 : 37] Right. I mean these. These all this fruit. And you're like these people know what they're doing. Well in that line of thought. Especially in this day. You connected these people knowing what they were doing with the God they were serving.

Because the God they're serving over there is giving them produce like this. The God they're serving over there is allowing their gardens to grow like this. The God they're serving over there has enabled them to build houses like this.

What have we done? Oh we've just lived in the wilderness our whole life. Right. And God's putting them in a mess. And what he's saying to them is be careful to maintain your separation from everyone else.

To not assimilate with them. And to us it seems drastic. To us it seems almost horrible.

And this is where we get this imagery of God of the Old Testament being a big mean God. I don't mean we as in personally us but other people. Because they read passages like this where God says utterly destroy them.

[11 : 47] They say oh God is so mean. But as we know God had given them 400 plus years to repent. Because Abraham had traveled in this region building altars declaring or calling on the name of the Lord.

Which is a wording for preaching Christ. Or preaching the word of God. Declaring God's praises among the people. And they saw these testimonies. And they heard these testimonies. And they seen that.

And they had all this time to repent. And God was patient. And now God was going to use his people to be his instruments of judgment upon the nation. Really stretch your mind just a little bit.

And you start reading the works of prophecies. I think it's Hosea especially. No Haggai. And others who declare that God is using this instrument as a hammer in his hand.

To declare his judgment upon his people. That God's using this nation. And bringing that nation to be the judgment tool upon his people. And then he will take that nation and destroy it.

[12 : 47] And you're just like wow. And what is it showing? Everything. All these wars and rumors of wars. And all these things are going on. They're absolutely within the hand of God. He's completely in control. He's got all things literally in the palm of his hand.

The Bible tells us he takes the heart of kings. And he turns it like waters in the palm of his hand. He can move them however he wants to. But what he's telling his people here is. You're coming to be my instrument of judgment for their sins and their rebellions.

Just be careful not to assimilate with them. Be careful to stay separate from them. Your separation is a part of your set apartness. I don't even know if that's the right word. It is one way you are to be isolated.

To live amongst but not live like. And he says destroy everything that represents their gods. Cut down the asherah.

Destroy the bells. Burn these things. Crumble them up. Crush them. Get rid of it. Read the history. They didn't do that. Why? You'll read testimonies.

[13 : 49] For those of you following the yearly reading plan. You're reading his testimonies. And we're going through the book of 2 Kings. It's a great book. Right? 1 and 2 Kings are great. There's all these changing of kings. And we get so confused.

Because I don't know why the kings in Israel had to have names like the kings of Judah. And there's Joash and then Johash and all these kings who sound just alike. And what this one did right and the sight of the Lord and the sword of worship.

Except he didn't destroy the Asherah poles. Or he allowed the high places to remain. And as long as these remained, there was this assimilation.

It worked for them. Maybe it'll work for us. The first thing God calls his people to do is completely separate themselves from the practice of all others. Right? Don't look like them.

It's hard. But it's a reality. Because God says this. And it's this warning passage. He says, don't give your daughters to their sons for marriage.

[14 : 45] And don't take their daughters for your sons for marriage. Don't intermarry with them. Because they will lead your sons away from worshipping me. He said, you're not going to change them.

They'll change you. We read in the New Testament this. What fellowship does light have with darkness? Because we are to push it back against the darkness.

Not to fellowship with the darkness. And it's this reality that quite often makes us uncomfortable. But it's the calling that God has called us to the lives of separation.

While involved in the world he's put us in. So we see there's separation from all others. Number two, the separation is a direct result. The second thing, it is the selection.

Their selection for God's praise. The fact that God chose them. The fact that God chose them. The enabling that believers have to be separated while living among.

[15 : 52] Is because we find that our position doesn't come from those we live among. But from he who chose us out of. Okay. When we are living for the recognition or the acceptance of those who are our counterparts.

Or those who we live beside. Then it is hard to separate ourselves from them. But when we realize we have been chosen by one above all others. Then it's okay if we stand out and we're a little bit different.

Because we don't need the recognition or the acceptance or the congratulations. Or we don't need to fit in here if we belong somewhere else.

We don't need to be one with this. Or as Tony Evans would say, we're of another realm. We belong to another kingdom.

And he says it here. He says you are to completely separate yourselves. Because of verse 6. For you are. I love this.

[16 : 56] Is God talking to perfect people here? No. Absolutely not. Does God know they're going to mess up? Yes. I mean. Achan is in this multitude.

Right? The first city they go into. He sees something he's not supposed to take. And he takes it. I mean the very first city. He's there. There are a lot of people who are here.

Right? None of them perfect. But God makes these emphatic declarations. Just like Jesus. When we get to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says you are the city set on the hill.

You are the salt of the earth. These emphatic declarations. When Paul writes to the church at Corinth. I mean the church at Corinth had major, major, major issues.

Some describe it as probably the most wicked church in all of scripture. It is a church with bad problems. It is the church at Corinth that Paul declares that one of the members he's handed over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh.

[17 : 59] Right? Paul says that church member is so out of bounds. I've given him over to Satan. Hopefully that Satan will just take care of him. So that he doesn't get in the way of the spread of the gospel anymore. And you're just going to make you scratch your head.

But remember what Paul says when he writes them. Including that member. He said to the saints which are at Corinth. To the saints which are at Corinth. He declared to them emphatically they were saints.

Now look at what it says in verse 6. For you are a holy people to the Lord. You are. Gotta love the crying of kids walking down the church aisles by the way.

Right? How many of our kids have had that walk? It's alright brother. You don't have to shut the door. It's just a reminder of the Bible. You know. We understand. There's some passages in Proverbs that speak to that.

Right? That walk with mom. That's just like oh no. Anyway. There's probably a lot of praying going on. But maybe not a lot of praising going on those walks.

[18 : 59] But anyway. So we understand. We come back to scripture. I told you I'll get on a squirrel every now and then. Verse 6. For you are a holy people. What is he doing?

He's reminding them of the position they have. Not the position they have earned. He doesn't declare to them that they can be or will be.

Or if they're good enough they're going to be. He reminds them of who they are. So that they will be what they already are. Later on we read of their obedience.

But he declares to them before he ever gives them this command to obey. He reminds them of who they are positionally. You are a holy people. God chose you.

For you are a holy people. To the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession. Out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

[19 : 55] Let's just go ahead and say it here. And we need to understand this. Right? That we are holy because God chose us for himself. Everything that belongs to him is holy.

He is holy, holy, holy. Thrice holy. Completely holy. Without any aspect of imperfections.

Everything that dwells in his presence is holy. Right? Everything that surrounds his throne is holy. Go read it. We will, Jesus says, can sit on his throne with him.

We will cast our crowns before his throne. We will declare his worthiness in his presence. But he declares to us, you are holy. Now, that makes a difference.

Because we caution each other. People say, well, I'm no saint. I'm just a sinner saved by grace. And I always answer back, yes, but a sinner saved by grace, according to the word of God, is a saint.

[20 : 53] Therefore, we must behave like saints. Because, see, we can use that sinner saved by grace as an excuse to do things we know we should never do. When we understand God calls us a saint and he calls us holy, that cautions us from doing what we want to do.

See the difference? When we understand who we are positionally, God says, I'm holy and I'm a saint. Therefore, the expectation is, I am to live like he sees me.

In our family, we say, well, your last name is a representation of this family. Therefore, we expect you to represent this family. God says, I am holy, holy, holy.

You are my holy people because you belong to me. Therefore, because of who you are positionally, and the only reason you are holy is because I chose you. And therefore, since I have chosen you, you are holy.

You're going to live different. When we make God our choice, then we get to choose what we do with him. When we understand the scriptural mandate that God chose us, we don't get to make a choice.

[21 : 55] We respond because he chose us. We respond and we live accordingly because of the fact that he chose us. And we have a God that is that big.

He chose us for his own possession. And the only way that doesn't move us is if we don't have this great view of who chose us. Right? It's not like we were chosen to play on a backyard football team.

Right? It's not like we were chosen to play on a little league baseball team or a junior pro basketball team. We were chosen by the king of kings and lord of lords. We were chosen by he who spoke it all into existence.

And we were chosen to be his people. And therefore, because of who we are positionally, because of his selection of us, and as he declares to the people here, as Moses declares, because of God's selection of them, they are completely set apart.

And now all of a sudden we realize, I don't really care what everybody else, I mean, I know this sounds bad. It doesn't matter what everybody else says about me. God says I'm holy. God says I'm his.

[22 : 57] God chose me to be his person for his own possession. It doesn't matter if anybody else chooses me. It doesn't matter if anybody else likes me.

It doesn't matter if nobody else wants anything to do with me. It doesn't matter if I have to live this life set apart and completely isolated from everything this world thinks is wonderful and great because God has chosen me for his.

And he says that he set his love towards me. Look at what it says. The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any of the peoples. What is it saying? God didn't choose me because I had it going on.

Right? God didn't choose them because God didn't look down and go, like, now there's some people right there I can use, right? Look how strong they are. Look how mighty they are. Look how powerful they are. God didn't look at them and go, they got it going on.

They're powerful enough. That's who I want to. No, God chose a man living amongst an idolatrous nation, probably worshiping multitude of idols, chief of those being the moon god.

[23 : 55] That's Abram out of the land of the Ur-Chaldeans. God chose probably one of the most unlikely of men and said, that's the man right there. And we know he's unlikely because even after God chose him, he lied twice.

He was scared to death. He messed up. He made faults. His family tree is full of faults and failures and full of all kinds of problems. The Jewish people really are. And then God says, now you know what I'm going to do before I really begin to show my praise to you?

I'm going to put you in slavery for 400 years. And I'm going to take all knowledge of warfare and all knowledge of all this out of your mind. And I'm just going to make you nothing but slaves. And I'm going to liberate you from the most powerful kingdom of that time.

And as you leave, you're going to blunder them without raising a weapon. And then I'm going to lead you across the wilderness and give you a land that dispossessed seven nations greater than you. He said, he didn't do that because he thought they could do it.

He did that because God was going to do it. And he did that to show them the selection, the fact that this God chose me. Listen, the right understanding of the gospel is this. God didn't choose me because I was worthy.

[24 : 55] It says, while I was yet a sinner, God sent his son to die for me, right? When I was unlovable, he set his love on me. When I was still despising and forsaking and rejecting, you know, he chose me and called me and loved me and died for me.

And who I am positionally is because of his selection. And therefore, shouldn't I be set apart from all others? Shouldn't it make me different?

Shouldn't it make me look completely different than the world I live in? Because God chose me. May we not ever, ever, ever.

And I know I'm getting a little preachy on a Sunday night. But may we not ever, ever, ever, ever get over this fact. He chose us and set his love upon us.

Not because of who we are. But look at what it says. But because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which you swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

[26 : 08] He did it because he's a God who keeps his promises. The selection for God's praise. And looked at it that way?

The selection for God is all for his glory, not for my recognition. Right? How does he get the greater glory? When I'm set apart. Number three, and finally.

And I'll be finished. You see their separation from all others. You see their selection for God's praise. Third and finally. You see the security they enjoyed. The security they enjoyed.

Because God chose them. Now they're going into the land. These cities are fortified to the heavens. These places have, these nations seem to have a lot greater security. And in that mind frame, in that day, this is why you get when Elisha, when the man with leprosy came and spoke to Elisha, Naaman came.

And he had all the leprosy all over him. And he went to Elisha's door. And he knocked on the door. And Elisha sent his servant. And Naaman got mad because he thought Elisha would come make this pronouncement right.

[27 : 13] And all he said was, go wash in the Jordan River seven times. And he's like, oh, I want to go to the Jordan River. The Jordan River is dirtier than the river I came from. And his servant said, well, if he had told you to do something wonderful, wouldn't you have done that? He said, yeah, I'll do it.

So he went and washed it. And he came at me. And he was clean. Remember that? And you remember when he came back to Elisha? And he said, what can I give you? And Elisha, I don't want anything. You know, I don't need anything from you. I don't need to be enriched by you. Now, I know his servant later on did it.

And he got the leprosy. He got Naaman's leprosy. But before that, remember what Naaman asked? He said, can I take some of the dirt from this area? Can I get sacked full of dirt and put it on my mule? And Elisha said, yeah, whatever.

And I said, that's fine. You know why he did that? It's because in the mind frame those days, they thought God was confined to lands. So if he could take some of the dirt of that land, he could therefore worship God in his land.

Remember, that's what he said. While my master is worshiping the false god, I'm going to pour that dirt on the ground and stand on this dirt. That way, while standing on Judean soil, I can worship the god of Judah. So they thought the security rested in locations, right?

[28 : 14] That the god of that land, because there was this multitude of gods. But when they're going into Canaan, they had all these gods that they were trusting in. They had fertility gods. They had rain gods.

They had sun gods. They had gods for produce. They had gods for everything. And security seemed to rest in that. Well, they were going to fall and falter. And they were going to fall before the Lord their god. But God is telling them, you are more secure than anyone you're going to confront.

You have greater security because it says, know, verse 9, know therefore. Take these things to heart. Pay attention to them. Know therefore that the Lord your God, he is God.

The faithful God who keeps his covenant and his loving kindness is to a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commandments. There's the call to obey. But this is what it is to know. This is, by the way, one of the names of God.

We get these names of God slipped in throughout scripture. Here's one of the names of God. Know therefore the Lord your God, he is God. First of all, he is God. What is Deuteronomy 6?

[29 : 13] The Lord our God is one. Right? There is but one God. He is God. He's the true God. Here's his name. His name is El Emonah. That means the faithful God. El Emonah.

He is the faithful God. He is the God who will not fail. He is the God who cannot falter. He is the God who will keep his covenant. He is the God who will keep his word. He was the God who will always be secure.

He is the God who keeps his covenant and his loving kindness. That word loving kindness so rich. It is the word hesed. That means everything that is for our good. We see that over and over again.

His loving kindness to a thousand generations to those who love him and keep his command. He said, If you walk in faithful obedience, God is faithful.

You are secure. Right? Your security rests positionally in who he is. And you respond to who he is.

[30 : 10] He will keep you secure. But, he says, but repays those who hate him to their faces to destroy them. He said, you cast him aside? You want nothing to do with him?

He repays. He removes completely. Now, that is security. Because I long to serve a God who is faithful, who keeps and maintains those who live obediently in the position he has called them to.

But, is also able to defend his own honor and his own glory. Because, see, many people served a God who would go back and forth.

He may bless us. He may not. He may chastise us. He may not. It was completely dependent upon what was happening. Moses declares, you have a God of security.

He will do what he has declared. Therefore, live lives set apart. Verse 11, and we're done. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today to do them.

[31 : 27] Live lives set apart. Because of who he is and who you are in him. Live lives set apart. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day.

God, I thank you for your word. Thank you for the testimony of who you are. Lord, even tonight, we rejoice in your grace and your mercy. Lord, in your mighty movement among your people.

We give you all the glory and all the praise. So much that we do not deserve. But God, so much praise that is due your name. Lord, be with us as we leave here tonight. May we live lives set apart for your glory.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

[33 : 27] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[38 : 28] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.