

Deuteronomy 11:13-32

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[0 : 00] We are going to be back in the book of Deuteronomy. Back in the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 11 is where we will be at this evening. Deuteronomy chapter 11, verses 13 through 32 is where we will be focused on.

So Deuteronomy chapter 11, verses 13 through 32, as we just continue to make our way through the Old Testament, and in particular we're in the book of Deuteronomy, and we're making our way through Scripture, and we're really at this time, at the end of the Pentateuch, Pentateuch's first five books of the Bible.

So this is the end of the Pentateuch. This is the closing of it. This wraps up what Christ refers to in the New Testament, the writings of Moses or the law.

If you ever read, it is written in the law with a capital L in the New Testament. The law is a direct reference to the first five books of the Bible. That was considered by the Jewish people the law.

So that's the Pentateuch. And this is the conclusion of that. In Deuteronomy, just like great conclusions, kind of repeats and reiterates a lot of the things that have already been said prior to that.

[1 : 09] And it is Moses' final message to the people of God before they entered the Promised Land. This is literally, as Deuteronomy chapter 1 says, Moses expounding the law or trying to make clear what God's expectation is for His people as they go into the Promised Land and they enter a new season of life.

As we move on from here in Deuteronomy chapter 12, you will see, you won't see it tonight. We'll see it next time we're together in the Old Testament, be it Sunday night or next Wednesday night, however the Lord leads us.

But Deuteronomy chapter 12 really just kind of emphasizes this change. He says you're entering a season of rest. You're entering a season of renewal.

You're going to be in the Promised Land. You're not going to be wandering anymore or traveling around and moving from place to place. You're going to come to a place of permanence and a place of rest. And everything was about to be different for the people of God, but the expectation of God was the same.

It was the same throughout all of the law, the same requirements of when God called His people to Himself. And this is what Moses is repeating. And we'll kind of just continue to dive into that in Deuteronomy 11, verses 13 through 32.

[2 : 26] Before we do, let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for this evening. We thank You for Your faithfulness to us. We thank You for the blessing of gathering together. We thank You for Your Word. And Lord, we thank You for the great privilege it is of reading Your Word together.

We pray, O Lord, as we open up Scripture, Lord, that You would open our hearts and minds up. Lord, that You would open us up to the truth that You are declaring to us. And Lord, that that truth would change us.

That truth would move us. And Lord, that it would grow us to become more and more like You. And Lord, that You would help to strengthen and undergird us. And Lord, that we would continue to be more in Your image.

And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Deuteronomy chapter 11, starting in verse 13. If you remember, Moses here in chapter 10 and starting in 11 is really encouraging God's people to faithfulness, right?

He's encouraging them, when you go into the promised land, be faithful. Do everything that I'm commanding you to do. When you go into the promised land, obey. Because God, you're not there because you earned it.

[3 : 28] You're not there because you're better than everybody else. You're not there because you've worked so hard for it. You're there because of God's grace and His mercy and His loving kindness that He's set upon you.

And He's freely giving you these things. There's also this reminder of God's discipline upon the inhabitants of Canaan. This is something that we have to keep in mind as we read these truths.

The nation of Israel was about to take possession of the land of Canaan. They never take full possession of everything God deeds to them, if you will.

So, from the River Nile all the way over to the Euphrates River and going up north and then down all the way to the Salt Sea. They never really take possession of all of that land.

The closest they get to it is during the reigns of David and possibly during the reign of Solomon and his son. But they never take possession of all of it. And the thing we need to remember is that as they took this land, they weren't just going in, and we'll see it tonight, just taking hold of some land that wasn't rightfully theirs and kicking the people out.

[4 : 36] God was using them as instruments of discipline. So, one of the things that is constantly put before them is the fact that God was disciplining what we call all the ites.

The Hittites, the Jebusites, the Canaanites. And yes, I know that light just went out. It's been going off and on. It's got kind of a strobe effect. We've been working on our lighting here at the church and trying to add little things to it.

I'm just joking. We're just hoping the rafters don't catch on fire. But anyway, as we go through this, we are reminded God was disciplining certain people, right?

Chapter 12 tells us that the Canaanites, in their worship of a false god, even offered up their own children in fire, right? So, it was God's discipline, but also God's grace in that he was giving the land to the nation of Israel.

And he was reminding them of this two-fold thing, God's discipline and God's gracious provisions. You'll see that tonight. But he's encouraging them to stay faithful. He's encouraging them not to put themselves on a pedestal and say, Well, we would never lose the land.

[5 : 45] Because if God could take it away from the Canaanites, he could also take it away from the Israelites. And he does. And that happens historically. We see it. But we read in Deuteronomy 11, starting in verse 13, It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments, which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul, that he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and the late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.

He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them.

Or the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the house, that the ground will not yield its fruit. And you will perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.

You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as affrontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk along the road, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, on your gates, so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth.

[7 : 06] For if you are careful to keep all this commandment, which I am commanding you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and hold fast to him, then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river to the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea, and no man will be able to stand before you.

The Lord your God will lay the dread of you, and the fear of you on all the land on which you have set your foot, as he has spoken. I'm setting before you today a blessing and a curse.

The blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today, and a curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

It shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Abel. Are they not across the Jordan, east of the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanite, who live in the Araba, opposite Gilgal, opposite the Oaks of Mora?

[8 : 17] For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall possess it and live in it, and you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the judgments which I am setting before you today.

Deuteronomy 11, verses 13 through 32. I want you to see this evening, the active obedience of his people, the active obedience of the Lord's people. The first thing we need to understand is that obedience is not just some finite, think so, maybe so mentality.

Obedience is an action. It is something they do. It is the way they live. It is the way they operate. It is to be the way that they move. It is to be the determining factor in the decisions they make. Obedience is not some head knowledge.

It is not just some agreement with, like, yes, these things are good. Obedience is an active sense of making and doing the right thing, right? It is the decisions that they make.

It is the intentionality with which they live. It is the ability that they have to have discernment. Obedience is to be an active element of their life. And as they live in active obedience, not just nodding the head and going, yes, that's right, we agree with that, and sure, that sounds great, but actively doing everything God commanded them to do, then it would impact each and every part of their life.

[9 : 36] It would be the thing which would kind of permeate their culture. It sets them apart. We really start fleshing this out as we make our way through the book of Deuteronomy, how they completely are set apart because of their intentionality and obedience and doing everything God told them to do.

I'm sorry, I don't know why my voice tends to be doing this, but it's okay. One thing we understand about all the laws and the requirements and the regulations that God puts upon his people is to set them apart, right?

It was to make them look different, and it was to cause others to be drawn to himself. So God set them apart in order to draw other people to him.

And the best way to attract people is to show what it looks like to live under the blessings of Yahweh. And people were to look at the nation of Israel and go, yes, as they actively obey and they actively follow the Lord their God, look at the blessings that rest upon their life.

And people were to see the difference. And over and over again, we have the reassurance that it will be that way. Now, we need to be careful because there's this line of thought that if I do this, then God has to do that, right?

[10 : 48] If I obey him and if I do everything he tells me to do, then God is compelled to do this. We don't ever want to get into that name it and claim it type of theology.

We don't ever want to get into that belief that God is compelled to do anything for us, right? So most of these truths that we see in Scripture are general truths, right?

As we live obedient lives, God blesses us through that obedience. God is not compelled. It's just a result of our obedience, right? Because everything God commands us to do is for our good.

Every law, every regulation, every requirement, every mandate is for the good of his people. So as we actively live for the good that God has set for us, then the blessings of the Lord flow through us.

That does not mean God has to do these things. It just means these things tend to happen or they are the natural result of them. And I give that disclaimer because reading the book of Proverbs, for instance, or reading a lot of wisdom Scripture, we see these truths that if we do this, then these things will happen, and if we do this, then these things will happen.

[12 : 04] And then we read the book of Job, and we see that Job was righteous, yet everything fell apart. See, that Job was righteous and everything, he lost everything. Sure, at the end, everything is given back to him, but he still lost everything, right?

And our head kind of smokes a little bit because it says, well, it doesn't seem to make sense. Job did everything the book of Proverbs says to do, and it still lost everything. Okay? That's because God is not compelled to do anything.

These are just the outcomes that we normally would see. This is what we would expect is the blessings. And we have to say that because Moses tends to put a lot of that together here. But the one thing that we see, four truths, and I'll make my way through them very quickly, okay, that are a result of the act of obedience of God's people.

Number one, we see that they trust. It is a trust in his provisions. It is a trust in the provisions of God. To live a life of act of obedience is literally to trust in the provisions of God.

Moses says, if you do all that I command you to do, if you are faithful to follow all the precepts, the statutes, the commandments that God is giving you, then God will be faithful to send the rain, the early rain and the late rain.

[13 : 17] Now, that doesn't mean like it rained this morning and it stopped now, it's raining again later. In the land of Israel there, even to this day, they have what they call early rains and late rains. That's early in the year and late in the year.

And those two rains are instrumental. Those two rains are absolutely necessary for production of crop, right? They are there for grain production. They are there for grape production.

They are there for all those times. The reason there was so much fermentation of grape juice and drinking of grape juice during that time is because the time that the grapes ripened was in time that it was dry, right?

So it was the dry season throughout the land of Israel. So God had provided a way for them to have something to drink during the time when it was not raining. All right? God's provisions were so amazing in that that he provided a way because there are so many wadis, that is, dry riverbeds, that would just overrun during the rainy seasons.

And they built all these cisterns, dug all these holes in the ground, and this is where they would store water. I mean, it's amazing feats that you read about even in biblical history, and you see how the Hezekiah's tunnel, which was dug several miles just to bring water in, right?

[14 : 25] And you see all these things. But what he's telling us is that if you actively follow and you actively lead, then God will bring the rain that you need. And he says this rain will lead to the production of your crops in the field, but also to the production of grass in your pasture so that your cows can eat.

Because when we go to chapter 12, we're going to read the fact that if you want to eat some of your livestock, hey, by all means, if you want to eat a cow like a gazelle or a deer, then slaughter it. Eat it at your house. Have you a barbecue, right?

Grill you a steak. It's okay. Eat it wherever you want to. Just don't eat the blood. And what God is saying is he's providing. Now, Moses did not speak of rain unintentionally because when they were about to go into Canaan and take possession of the land, there is a God with a little lowercase g, a false God that the Canaanites worshiped as their rain God.

And you read about him all the time throughout the Old Testament. And it is the God Baal, B-A-A-L. The God in the worship of Baal and even the ashram poles that are there.

And in the worship of Baal, Baal was seen as the rain God or the God of land production and the God of the soil. So what he is telling them here is that if you actively are walking in active obedience and faithfulness to the Lord your God, you don't have to look to a false God to provide for you because the true God meets your every need.

[15 : 46] See, the Canaanites had a God for rain, a God for the fields, a God for fertility, a God for the animals, a God for health, and a God, all these different gods with the lowercase g, all these false gods.

And they were trying to worship every one of them to make sure everything was going right. If you couldn't have any children, well, then you had to go to the fertility God. Or if your cattle were not giving birth to the offspring the way they should, then you had to talk to the fertility God.

Or if it didn't rain, you had to go pray to the rain God. And what he's telling them is walking in faithful, active obedience is really saying, God, I'm trusting in you and you alone to be the provider for everything we need.

You will provide the rain. You'll provide the production of our crops. You will provide the fields for our cows to eat in. You will provide every single thing we need.

And we don't have to result to idolatrous false worship. We don't have to result to sacrificing our children or to building these poles.

[16 : 50] They do all these things, right? These things come about. But from the very, very beginning, Moses is encouraging them. Active obedience is a testimony that you're trusting God to be the provider of all things.

It is an absolute display of 100% trust. And we see that even today, right?

We begin to stray from true biblical teaching the moment we begin to think we are in control of anything we really need.

To surrender to the reality that you're trusting God. Now, that trust does not mean we don't work. That trust does not mean we do not have to put forth some effort. That trust does not mean we don't have to do the things that God has given us the ability to do.

It is not, well, I'm going to sit here with my hands in my pocket and I'm going to do all these things. But if God has called us to do something, God is leading us to do something, and we are following him in active obedience, we can absolutely trust that he will provide everything we need along the way.

[17 : 59] Absolutely. If that active obedience leads us to be different or leads us to live differently than those around us, we can absolutely trust that he is the one providing.

So it is a trust in the provisions of God. Number two, active obedience treasures the word of God. It treasures the word of God.

Look at what he says here. It is a repetition of something we have already read. But he says, You shall therefore impress the words of mine, or these words of mine, on your heart and on your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

You shall teach them to your sons, talking to them when you sit down in your house, and when you walk along the road, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. It's this repetition, this reality. We saw this in Deuteronomy chapter 6, this importance that revolves around the word of God.

But those who live in active obedience are those who treasure the word of God. And he is, now we have seen, Jewish history shows us, and you've probably seen pictures even today, of the Jewish male that has this little box that's right here on his front, his forehead.

[19 : 07] And that box contains a small little scroll of scripture. This is exactly what they're doing. They're trying to fulfill this scripture. They're putting it on their forehead. They're putting it on their forehead, and they're tying it around their wrists.

And they had these garments with all these long filantries on them, and they would be symbols and cords, and they would impress them on their doors, and they would write them. And I told you back when we were looking at Deuteronomy 6, if you've ever seen the movie Ben-Hur, and you've seen Ben-Hur when he walks into his house, and there's that little box there on the side of his house, he actually touches it at the end when he comes back home.

The old movie Ben-Hur, the one that's about four hours long, and it's really good. You know, that's kind of my thing. But he touches that box when he comes home, and you're like, well, that's weird. He touched this little, what we would call like a little mail letter box, right?

But it's not that. That would have been where the faithful Jewish individual would have kept a copy of the scroll or the Word of God. And by touching it, they were recognizing this house stands on the authority of the Word of God.

And there are all of these outward displays, right? There are all these signs and symbols to say, this is what we're doing. But what's important with this teaching here is this teaching is not saying make an outward display.

[20 : 15] This teaching is saying that you should impress them on your hearts and on your minds, right? That it should be so much more than an outward display. It should be the very thing you treasure. It's so much more than having Scripture verses written on your wall or having them pasted on signs and having them.

And I'm not against those things. I mean, we have them in our house, right? We have them there. And we had a young man living with one time. He lived with us for 11 weeks. And he walked around our house just about every day reading Bible verses.

And as far as I know, it's probably one of the only times he ever read Bible verses. But he would just walk around reading all of our signs. And, hey, if that's what it took to get some Scripture verses in his mind and in his heart, that's okay. There's nothing wrong with that.

But those verses on the wall mean nothing if they're not treasured in our hearts and minds. Because then it just becomes an outward display. A show. Right?

You remember Ben-Hur fell away. That box on the doorpost of his house meant nothing for the majority of that movie. It meant nothing. It wasn't until that encounter with Christ and the transformation that comes along that way that it begins to take meaning there.

[21 : 22] But what we see here is Moses says those who are actively obeying, those who are walking in faithful, active obedience, are those who have treasured the Word of God in their hearts.

They've impressed it upon themselves. And we know they are treasuring it because they're talking about it. Right? They're talking about it to their sons when they're in the house sitting down or when they're outside walking or when they're working or when they're moving.

And they're talking about it because we always talk about the things we treasure. Always. Always talk about the things we treasure.

This group over here is one of my treasures. Right? It's a gift. Wife gave me. The Lord gave me my wife and he gave me my children. Now he's giving me my daughter-in-law.

He's giving me a granddaughter. And the boys pick on me all the time. My sons tell me, Dad, you're getting soft because you're a grandfather now. I said, I'm not just a grandfather. I have a granddaughter. And that gives me a right to be soft. Right?

[22 : 21] That's okay. I can treasure that. These are gifts. The Lord gives. And I'll talk about that. I'm learning. And all you people told me is being grandparent and saying it's a whole different world. And you're right. It's a whole different world. It's pretty fun.

You know, I'll just give them back. But we're learning. But it's great. You know, there's things we treasure. But when we treasure the word, we talk about it. We live it out.

It's not something we have to do. It's something we get to do. Right? And this is the command. To live in active obedience is to walk about with this treasury of the word of God.

And press upon the hearts and the minds and the souls. Active obedience treasures the word of God. Number three. Active obedience triumphs through the presence of God.

It triumphs through the presence of God. Because he says here, as you are walking in obedience, then you will continue to walk about. And wherever you go, God's going to give you that land.

[23 : 24] But notice what it says. He goes before you. And he will go before you. And he will put the fear of you and the nations around you. He will go before you. And he will fight the battles. And he will put the dread of you and the nations around you.

He will go before you, it says. And you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. So we see here, they don't win the victory because of strength or sheer size or numerical advantage.

They don't win the battles because of their military advancement. Even though the nation of Israel now is one of the most military, if not the most military advanced nation in the world. They don't win because of that.

They don't win because of their acumen and fighting techniques. They win solely because of the presence of the Lord their God among them. And as they walk in faithful, active obedience, they triumph over and over and over and over again.

Simply because of the presence of God. God leads his people forth victoriously. This shows us something, right? If he's going before us, we cannot follow him in disobedience because only obedience follows.

[24 : 36] And we cannot be still and follow him. Henry Blackaby used to say, you can't be still and follow the Lord your God. Because as he's moving, you're moving.

As he's working, you're working. As he's going, you're going. Right? So this shows an active following after, trusting that he's going to lead us forth victoriously.

And the triumph we will have is not because of who we are, but because who it is that's with us. This is the same picture when Jesus gives to the church that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

The picture there is that the church is not on the offensive. The church is not on the defensive. The church is on the offensive, right? Gates are there to keep people out or to keep things in.

Right? So the gates are always a defensive picture. It is to stop something. And so the picture that Christ is giving of the church there is that if we follow him, the gates of hell will not prevail.

[25 : 33] We will follow him in pushing out darkness. Right? And we will be going into enemy territory. And it is he who we are following. And we as a church are on the offensive and we're following him.

And the Bible says he leads us forth victoriously. Only as we live in active obedience. It triumphs through the presence of God. Fourth and finally, and this one will be quick.

Active obedience turns from the ways of the world. Turns from the ways of the world. We're not going to spend a lot of time on this one because Moses spends the majority of this time or the bulk of time on this subject at the end of the book.

And we'll see it there. It really is he contrasted. But he introduces it for the first time here. Moses says, Behold, I introduce to you. I'm offering to you both blessings and curses. Blessings and curses.

This is a theme that runs throughout Deuteronomy. It is really at the very end of the book. Sorry, that was really loud. At the end of the book, it is a major theme because he is setting it up there.

[26 : 33] And there are two mountains which he has displayed. And he tells them there are two mountains on the other side of the Jordan River. And they were literally, when they were to cross the Jordan River and they settled on land, and they did this, they were to go to these two mountains.

And Judah and the Levites and some others, forgive me, the Levites stayed in the middle. The tribe of Judah, there's a couple of tribes that got on the Mount of Blessing. And then a few tribes that got on the Mount of Curses.

And the Levites were in the middle and they were offering these sacrifices. And they were to pronounce on the Mount of Blessing the blessings of obedience. And they were to pronounce on the Mount of Curses the curses for disobedience because they were laid out for us at the end of the book of Deuteronomy.

And they were to say these things. And all the people were to go, yes, amen, amen, we get it, we understand. If we follow God, this is what happens. If we turn away from following God and we walk in rebellion, then these things will happen.

By the way, every one of those curses that are pronounced, they do come about. They are removed from the land. They are let out of captivity. They are dispersed among a multitude of people. All these things happen, right? All these things come about historically.

[27 : 34] And then they were to offer sacrifices. But the whole reason there's two mountains here is because Moses is giving a visible, literal picture. You don't walk in a valley, right? You're climbing one of those two mountains.

You're not in between. You're either walking in active, faithful obedience and you're experiencing the blessings of God. Or you're walking in active disobedience and you're experiencing the curses of God. This is really, it's just a choice.

You're either going to go the way of the world and walk in disobedience and experience the cursing of God, which has been put on display among the inhabitants of Canaan. Or you're going to turn from the ways of the world and you're going to go up to the mountain of blessing and walk in active obedience and experience the blessings of God.

The two mountains were to be a sign that you're in one of those two mountains. You're either walking in obedience or you're walking in the ways of the world. And you had to choose between the two.

It is really this theme we get throughout Scripture. There is no lukewarmness, right? You're either hot or cold. You're either all the way walking in active obedience or you're walking in absolute disobedience.

[28 : 45] You're either on the mountain of blessing or you're on the mountain of cursing. Moses says, I'm laying it before you. I'm giving you the choice. Those blessings and curses we'll read about later.

But here we just want to know that those who walk in active obedience have chosen which mountain they're climbing. And they have to actively turn from the ways of the world and go up the mountain of blessing.

This is where we see the active obedience of his people in Deuteronomy 11 verses 13 through 32. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 14] Thank you.

Thank you.