

# YOBL

## Year of Biblical Literacy

# Week 9: Wilderness Finale Part 2 - Obey and Live

## Daily Reading for Week

- Deuteronomy 7-9, Psalm 55
- Deuteronomy 10-12, Psalm 56
- Deuteronomy 13-14, Psalm 57
- Deuteronomy 15-16, Psalm 58
- Deuteronomy 17-20, Psalm 59
- Deuteronomy 21-23, Psalm 60
- Deuteronomy 24-27, Psalm 61
- Video: Deuteronomy
- Read: Deuteronomy 11, 28, & 30

## Focus of time together

To recap and conclude our time in Deuteronomy and the Torah by reflecting on the major concluding theme of choosing between obedience and disobedience, life and death, goodness and evil.

## Connecting Exercise

Share with a group any bible verse that you have memorised and the reason why you decided to memorise it.

## Opening Prayer

Read Moses' song from Deuteronomy aloud as a prayer - start at Deuteronomy 31:30 and read through to 32:47.

## Intro to Discussion

The two predominant themes in Moses' sermon-like speeches recorded in Deuteronomy are 1) remembering versus forgetting, which we discussed last week, and 2) choosing to obey God versus choosing to disobey, which we will focus on this week. These crucial themes have been developing through the narrative of the Torah, but Moses comes back to them again and again in Deuteronomy. Moses reiterates these as the primary lessons to be drawn from Israel's history thus far, and therefore the most important thing for the new generation to hear and consider before entering the

Promised Land. And Moses' message isn't just for them. Remembering the Lord and choosing to obey Him remain dominant themes throughout the rest of the Old Testament as well. The prophets and authors of the historical books and psalms repeatedly describe Israel's successes as contingent upon their remembrance of God's wonderful actions in the past and their obedience to the statutes and decrees of the covenant. Similarly, Israel's failures are routinely tied to their forgetfulness and their disobedience to the covenant laws. The book of Deuteronomy challenges us as readers, saying in so many words, "If you learn anything from Moses' Book of the Torah, learn this: Obey God and you will live and prosper, but disobey God and you will suffer and die."

The following books (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) prove this to be true by chronicling the stories of generation after generation of Israelites choosing either obedience or disobedience and reaping the consequences. (Spoiler alert: as God predicts in Deuteronomy 31, Israel's story as a nation in the land is mostly one of disobedience.) This week, we'll take the time as we wrap up the Torah to sit with this second theme of obedience both for the sake of understanding the message of the Scriptures and in order to personally reflect on our own call to love and obey God and thereby choose life.

## **Whole Group Discussion (40 minutes)**

### **Questions for Basic Understanding**

*These questions are to help us interpret and understand the text as it was intended to be interpreted and understood.*

1. Read Deuteronomy 11 and 30. According to Moses' words in chapter 30 and the rest of Deuteronomy, what difference will it make whether Israel listens to God or not once they've occupied the land?
2. Specifically, what are the consequences of disobeying the covenant and the rewards for keeping it?
3. What exactly is it they are supposed to obey? What kind of stuff does God demand of them? (Hint: Think back on your reading through Deuteronomy this week. Chapters 12-26 are a recap and elaboration on the statutes and decrees that Israel is to adhere to.)

### **Questions for Listening to Scripture**

*These questions are to help us be affected by Scripture in the way it was intended to affect us*

What is your immediate reaction to these exhortations to obedience? When asked to obey God, do you respond eagerly like the Israelites first did at Sinai, saying, "We will do everything the Lord has said," (Ex 19:8)? Or is your natural reaction more resistant?

### **Questions for Interacting with Scripture**

*These questions are to help us slow down to taste and notice Scripture, savour its richness and meditate on the complexity of its meaning.*

1. What does the overall story of the Torah, concluding in Deuteronomy, say about mankind's general ability and willingness to be faithful and obedient to God?

2. Does the Torah end on a high note of hopefulness and enthusiasm, or is the story a more somber and sobering one?

## **Small Group Discussion**

### **Questions for Self Examination**

*These questions are to help us look at ourselves, be aware of who we are in the light of our interaction with Scripture and consider any appropriate action.*

1. What is God calling you to be obedient to right now?
2. In what ways are you struggling to listen to Him and tempted to disobey?
3. If you are super honest with yourself, what do you truly believe to be the consequences of disobedience? What benefit, if any, is it to listen to God in this instance?

### **Closing Time of Prayer**

Consider any invitations that the Holy Spirit may be bringing up in you to obey God more wholly. However, be slow to jump into commitments of obedience. As the Torah makes clear, God takes vows of behaviour seriously and holds us accountable to our promises. Rather, take the time to count the cost of obedience and search your heart for whether you are truly willing to pay the price of obedience. Then open up to God in prayer together, sharing any fear, guilt, excitement, doubt, hope, or desire you may be feeling.

Before leaving, share with one another which verse or passage, if any, you will try to memorise this week.