

4 Where Next?

Having left Egypt behind them, Israel is learning to live as God's people as they make their way to the promised land.

Readings for the Week

Deuteronomy 1-4:40

Deuteronomy 5-6

Deuteronomy 9

Joshua 3-4

Even though they come from the Bible, people outside the church still use expressions like "wandering in the wilderness" or "promised land." How are these phrases used?

Moses led people through a time of wandering because they did not trust in God to give them the land that they were promised. In Deuteronomy Israel is about to enter into the land and are reminded of their history, the promise, God's grace, and how they should live.

What do you think Israel should remember before making this big transition?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

What does loving God with your heart, soul, and might look like? Why is it so important to teach this command?

Judging from Israel's record of turning so quickly from God, we are a forgetful people. How can we work hard to remember this and other commands and promises of God?

This tendency to forget is addressed in Joshua. Read Joshua 4:1-7 to see what the people are told to do.

What does Joshua command the people to do so they will not forget? We may not think about building large stone monuments, but how can we still make memorials today so we never forget the good that God has done for us?

We are called to live a certain way by God, but we know we are bound to make mistakes and fail to live with perfect faithfulness. The good news is that perfection is not the basis for God's promises. Read Deuteronomy 9:1-8 where Moses reminds the people of their shortcomings.

*What is **not** the reason that God is giving Israel the promised land? Do the people have any reason for pride?*

Do you get tempted to be prideful about why God called you? Does God call people because they are good enough or righteous? On what does God base his call?

God has called us and saves us based on his grace. We do not deserve it nor could we earn it. Similarly, Israel is given a land because God had chosen them and made a promise, not because they earned it, and in that land they will be blessed with cities they did not build and vineyards they did not plant (Dt. 6:10-12). Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 to see the what God has in store to give to us.

What inheritance will we have? How is it different from the land given to Israel? What is this inheritance based on? What have we done to deserve it?

Israel had great doubts when it came to claiming their inheritance. They hesitated at the borders of the promised land because of it. Can we be certain that we will receive our inheritance?

Read Ephesians 1:11-14 to see if our inheritance is secure. What do we have that acts as a guarantee for us?

How can we apply what we are learning to the way we live today?

