

## **(11/30) Deut 4:32-6:8 “God of Life” - Handout<sup>3</sup>**

### **Summary**

Deuteronomy is a reflective final sermon offered by Moses to the people of Israel before they enter the Promised Land. As the final instructions to the people he has led, the particular topics and themes selected by Moses gain urgency and priority. The entire context speaks to the recurring issue of passing faith and faithfulness from one generation to another. Listen carefully to how God through Moses imagines this transfer to be successful. Our study this week will fall in two units. In the first (4:32-40) Moses offers an overview perspective. In the second (5:1-6:8), the focus is on the ten commandments and the establishment of an ethical nation.

### **Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 6:4-8**

As you read this section, remember that the people standing before Moses are forty years removed from the exodus from Egypt and the encounters with God on Mt. Sinai. Think about the role of church and family in the propagation of faith.

### **Discussion**

- What themes do you notice in these verses? What are the BIG Stories in Israel’s history to this point?
- What motivates / motivated God to do the things mentioned in this section?
- When the text says, “Ask now about former days...” (4:32), how does that happen in modern life? What responsibility does the church or families have in this?
- What is education in the church? How do we educate each other in ways that allow us to not merely acquire Bible knowledge, but to shape our identity (“we were slaves in Egypt”)?
- What responsibility does the older generation have to the younger in the propagation of faith? How can we be faithful to that responsibility?
- What impact does Jer 31:31f have on this model of faith transference?
- If we were writing a final sermon like Deuteronomy, what contemporary “mighty acts of God” from our lifetimes, congregation, and family would we include?

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<sup>3</sup> Derived from Mark Hamilton, “Now Choose Life! Deuteronomy for a Renewing Church”, 2001.

## ***Deuteronomy 5:1-6:3***

This section discusses the Ten Commandments given at Mt. Sinai to Moses and the former generation. Moses uses the term covenant to describe the relationship between God and Israel. In Ancient near eastern culture, a covenant was a treaty between two monarchs where each had responsibilities. The covenant document would often describe each parties responsibilities along with the penalties for breaking covenant. The book of Deuteronomy is organized in this same pattern. Some observations about this section:

- The idea that God is one is familiar to us, but not to be taken for granted. We are becoming a much more pluralistic culture.
- The Ten Commandments begin with the nature of God and honoring God as God and extend to relationships and ethics, not vice versa.
- There appears to be a parallel between the motives and actions of God toward Israel and the kind of people God asks Israel to be.

### **Discussion**

- The Ten Commandments opens with “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” How does the this reminder shape our understanding of these commandments?
- Do you think it is important that the discussion of “remember the former days” in chapter 4 comes before the listing of the Ten Commandments in chapter 5? Why or why not?
- The first three commands deal with the nature of God, followed by the Sabbath commandment, the family commandment, and five ethical rules. What importance is there to the order of the commands?
- Notice that the Sabbath commandment is the longest of all the commands. What does the Sabbath Commandment tell us about the nature of commerce and community that God desires?
- In Matthew, Jesus tells the Pharisee’s that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. What does observing the Sabbath teach us?
- If we were writing a final sermon like Deuteronomy, what contemporary “mighty acts of God” from our lifetimes, congregation, and family would we include?