



To Live a Better Story

Deuteronomy 32:45-47

Have you ever found yourself feeling like you are in the wrong story? Where you are, who you are with, and what you are doing is not what you were expecting. Maybe you are in a relationship that is not living up to your hopes and desires? Or maybe you are in a job that does not feel fulfilling or aligned with your passions and gifting. Or maybe you have wondered, how did I end up where I am? You were hoping for a better story.

Why study Deuteronomy?

- It gives the backstory: We can't fully understand the depth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection without knowing the chapters before. We need all of scripture to see and experience God's story, a Grand narrative of creation, fall, rescue, and redemption.
- All scripture is God breathed:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16

- Jesus actually quoted from the book of Deuteronomy more than any other book of the Bible second to the Psalms. In fact, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by the Satan, the evil one (Matthew 4), Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy. He quotes from Deuteronomy three times and from Psalms once because there is power in the words of scripture.
- Deuteronomy points to Jesus: All of scripture points to Jesus.

"He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses

and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Luke 24:25-27

- See also Zondervan *Jesus Storybook Bible* (The Story and the Song video)

The Heart behind Deuteronomy

- Deuteronomy comes from the Greek word, *Deuteronomion*, which means *second law* or *second telling*. But a lot more appropriate and more ancient title is the Hebrew title for Deuteronomy which is *Devarim*, which means *the words*.
- These are the last words of Moses, three speeches given to the next generation of Israelites as they are about to go into the promised land. These are words given to them so that they would not repeat the ways of their parents who were hardhearted and rebellious.
- Moses, Israel’s leader, God’s prophet is called to lead the people of Israel and meet with God and speak for God. Who is this God?

“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punished the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.’” Exodus 34:6-7

- This is the God of Israel choosing and bringing a people out of oppressive slavery, out of a land of capricious Egyptian gods. And land where the people never knew what to expect of their gods into a land of the Canaanite gods where people in fear sacrificed their own children to appease their gods. They were coming out of a very broken culture about to walk into a land with a very broken culture. God had chosen them and set them apart for Himself and for His ways, reflecting His very heart.
- Moses’ passion:

“When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, ‘Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you – they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.’” Deut. 32:45-47

- Moses wanted the Israelites to flourish, to live into all that God has for them, to live into God’s story of LIFE for them.
- The tone of Moses words:

"Listen, you heavens, and I will speak; hear, you earth, the words of my mouth. Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants." Deut. 32:1-2

Moses retells their story

- "These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the wilderness east of the Jordan – that is, in the Arabah – opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. (It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.) In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. This was after he defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and at Edrei has defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law..." Deuteronomy 1:1-5
- The word "law" is *torah* in the Hebrew. And a more appropriate translation would be "teachings." Moses is expounding on his teachings, retelling their story. And that is what we see in the following verses.
- Moses retells their story for there is power in their story and the better they understand their story, the more they will see God in it. In Deuteronomy, the word "remember" appears 16 times; "listen" appears 14 times; and 24 times we read the word "hear", *shema*, which means "listen and respond/obey." Moses is passionately giving them his last words, his deathbed speech to them to remember and listen. To remember of God's powerful and miraculous hand bringing them out of a land of slavery into freedom. And yet to also remember the hard heartedness of their parents and the consequences of their rebellious ways. This is the same for us, the better we understand our story, the more we see God in our story and the story He is calling us into.

"First, God is not merely the Creator of our life. He is also the Author of our life, and he writes each person's life to reveal his divine story. There never has been nor ever will be another life like mine – or like yours. Just as there is only one face and name like mine, so there is only one story like mine. And God writes the story of my life to make something known about himself, the One who wrote me. The same is true of you. Your life and mine not only reveal who we are, but they also help reveal who God is." – Dan Allender, *To Be Told*

The better we know our story, the more we see God and are a part of God's story. And when we are a part of God's story, we live a better story.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that

so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)