

Q4 L11 - Deuteronomy in the Later Writings - 2021-12-11

Luccas Rodor: Happy Sabbath. Welcome to the "Sabbath School Study Hour" here at the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Greater Sacramento area. Thank you so much for being with us, for investing this time, and deciding to study the Word of God this morning. Welcome to those watching online and those of the local community that are here with us today. I'm happy to see you. Sabbath is always a happy day, and I'm sure that we're going to learn a lot, grow a lot being together this morning. We're going to be studying today the 11th lesson of this quarterly, this quarterly that has been so important to our growth spiritually. The title of this lesson is "Present Truth in the Book of Deuteronomy," and what we've is that the book of Deuteronomy is really interwoven into the entire gospel story.

Today we'll be studying lesson number 11, which is-- or has the title the Deuteronomy-- or "Deuteronomy in the Later Writings," and so today Pastor Shawn is going to be leading out. We have a lot to learn with him, and I'm excited to listen to what he has to say for us.

But before we actually begin and before we invite our song service out to lead us in praise and in worship, I'd like to invite you to take advantage of our free offer. Today's free offer is "God Drew the Plans," and so this is a free offer about the sanctuary, again, one of the deepest lessons in the biblical truth, and so I invite you to take advantage of this offer. If you would like this offer and you would like to have it with you physically, you can call the number 866-788-3966 or 866-Study-More, and you can ask for offer number 129. If you're in the Continental North America, you can get it mailed to you through also the text "SH135" to the number 40544, but if you want to find it online, you can also go to AmazingFacts.org, and you will have the online version of this lesson, and you'll learn a lot. Pastor Shawn, God bless you in the teaching of this lesson.

Shawn Brummund: It is good to be able to be here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church and be able to continue to study God's Word, and it's nice to have all of us that are here locally, and, of course, our friends online, and we are looking at lesson number 11, and so if you have your quarterlies with you, go ahead and open it to that. It's "Deuteronomy in the Later Writings."

What does that mean, "Deuteronomy in the Later Writings"? Well, for those of us who did our quarterly ahead of time, we know exactly what that means. For some of us here today, you might be just learning it for the first time, but we're going to be looking at the influence that the book of Deuteronomy had not only upon God's believers through the centuries since Moses came along and was inspired to write these letters and these books, but also God's prophets that also contributed to the Bible.

You know, one of the things that I think it's good for us to be able to either learn or remember is that the book of Deuteronomy and the first five books of the Bible is the very first books that were authored by God's prophets and preserved ever since.

Now, God has been speaking through prophets far before Moses came along. We have Enoch and Noah and all kinds of different milestone characters and individuals in which God had orally communicated to mankind God's important truths, but God had chosen Moses for a number of special purposes, and one of them was to be the first contributor and permanent author of what-- now call the Holy Bible, and so it's not by coincidence, and it's not-- shouldn't be by surprise that many of the later prophets were influenced by what God had already revealed through that first Bible writer by the name of Moses.

Now, of course, we've been studying the book of Deuteronomy, and the book of Deuteronomy is a summary of the first four books that he wrote. In particular, perhaps we could say the first three books, which is Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and so those three books are kind of an expansive version of what we call the book of Deuteronomy today. And of course, as we've already been studying in previous weeks, the book of Deuteronomy is actually essentially, for most of it, 90-plus percent of it is a series of speeches that Moses had been inspired by God to give to Israel in review as they renewed their commitment to the covenant that God had already given to Israel at Mount Sinai some-40 years

beforehand.

And so Deuteronomy, in the later writings, is looking at some different examples of how the truths that God revealed through this first Bible writer, in particular, the book of Deuteronomy then is found in later writings as God worked through different prophets and contributed and expanded the Holy Scriptures.

We're going to take the order just a little bit different than what we find in this week's lesson study, so I'd like to invite you to turn to Tuesday's lesson, and as we go to Tuesday's lesson, we're going to read Jeremiah 29:13. Now, the lesson study makes it easy for us. We don't have to open our Bibles for that. You can if you wish, of course, but Jeremiah 29, verse 13, it gives us a verse that many of us are familiar with. It is one of the most famous. Certainly, it's one that should apply to us personally as we continue to walk with the Lord. It says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your-- with all your heart," okay?

And so, again, many of us are familiar with this. Many of us can relate to it because there was a point in your past, as it was with mine, that you didn't have God in your heart, that you didn't know the Lord. For some of you, it maybe have been like me, where you didn't even believe that God necessarily exists, and certainly He wasn't relevant before you came to know Him personally and that He does exist. Jeremiah is speaking for the Lord as a mouthpiece, and God says, "And you will seek Me," as God says, first person, "and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart," and so God wants us to have a personal, heartfelt relationship with Him.

We need to put our whole heart into it, amen? And that's what it means as God is speaking through that. But did Jeremiah come up with this first? In other words, Jeremiah obviously was receiving this from the Lord. The Lord was speaking directly to Jeremiah's generation, to be sure, but is this the first time that Jeremiah had ever been exposed to these sort of words? Well, as it turns out, no. God had already spoken through the book of Deuteronomy and His prophet Moses many years beforehand.

So let's go to Deuteronomy chapter 4 now, and as we go to Deuteronomy chapter 4, we look at verse 26. So we're going in Deuteronomy chapter 4, and verse 26. All right, so Deuteronomy chapter 4, and verse 26, the Bible says, "And I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess. You will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the gods of the works of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell."

And you know, this, of course, is a prophecy, and one of the saddest truths that God reveals through the book of Deuteronomy, not only in the book of Deuteronomy and in Exodus, and I think you could probably find it in Leviticus--pretty certain you could probably find it in Numbers--is that God and Moses could see beyond their day. They could see beyond their generation, and they didn't--sadly, they didn't have to look very far into the future, and they saw that God's people would very quickly find themselves falling away from worshiping God and assimilating themselves into the false religions of the world and the nations and the cultures around them. And so both God and Moses continued to speak and say, "Listen, you know, I hate to say this, but we could see the future, and we know you're going to blow it, and because of that, there's going to be some very negative consequences that are going to take place."

And so, sadly, this is one of those situations and passages, but, verse 29, we find the hope and the mercy and the grace of God once again as we do repeatedly, not only through Moses's writings as they talk, as they address God's people's apostasy, their unfaithfulness, their bent towards sin and so on. But we also find that once they find themselves dealing with these negative consequences and after they receive the discipline of the Lord, that more than one of them come to themselves. More than one of them, just like the prodigal son, you know, came to realize, "Wait a minute, what have we done? We really have blown it. What were we thinking?"

And they come around, and they find themselves returning back to God, and God always, always, we find this pattern repeated all the way through the Old Testament, dozens of times, we find God's people

being addressed by God's prophet and by God Himself and sharing with them the negative consequences that either will come or have come. And then God always ends up with His merciful invitation and say, "My mercy is still available.

My grace is still there if you want to take advantage of it. We can still reconcile. We can still make things right," and you can have a brighter future, not only in this life but for the life to come, and that's the great gospel of Jesus Christ that we find from Genesis, all the way through the end of Revelation, and this is no exception. Verse 29, it says, "But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Sound familiar? Sure, we just read it in Jeremiah, didn't we?

And so we find here that the words and the invitation that God first gave through Moses in Deuteronomy is also found in Jeremiah. Sadly, again, they see that--God sees ahead and realizes that they're going to blow it. They're going to fall away from God. They're going to assimilate and into false religions, but He does tell us that there are those who will come back to Him. And so let's go to another example of this in the same day's lesson. That's Jeremiah chapter 7, and verses 1 to 7.

So let's go to Jeremiah chapter 7, and we're going to start with the first verse. So, again, I hope you have your Bibles with you. This is our Bible study time that we have each Sabbath morning, and so I just want to encourage you, if you have your Bibles, your devices, open your Word whatever way that you can get that Word in front of you so that you can make it your own.

There's just something about holding the Word of God and reading and setting your eyes upon it, even as you're also listening to it, that God might be able to do something very powerful in our hearts. In Jeremiah chapter 7, in verse 1, it says, "And the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 'Stand in the gates of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, "Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord.'"" And so God is instructing Jeremiah to stand at the gate of the Lord. These are people coming to church. Do you see that?

All right, so these are God's people starting to enter into the gates. They're entering through the front doors. They're parking in the parking lot, and they're coming into church to worship. That's what we're doing today as well, aren't we? And so it's like there's a prophet of God that is set at the entryway, just as you get out of your car but before you get into the front doors, and He has a message for His people." Verse 3, it says, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'"

Now, we're going to come back to that. What exactly does that mean? Many of us, when we read that, including yours truly, you know, I scratch my head and I say, "I'm not sure exactly where that's going." That's where the context can really help out as we continue forward. And then, verse 5, God and Jeremiah are addressing that generation. They're saying, "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever."

And so here we have that Jeremiah is reflecting the very book in which we've been studying for the last two-and-a-half-or-so months, and that's the book of Deuteronomy. That's the covenant that God had first cut with the first generations of Israelites that came out of Egypt, and so, sure enough, we find here that conditional offer that God gives to the chosen people, to these people that He chose, not because they're really better than any other people group, by far, but because He loved their fathers, the faithfulness of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and so on, and so He chose their descendants to be the chosen people to be held in a chosen position.

And one of the mistakes that God's people have made through the years, both in the Old Testament and also through the New Testament church, I think, to a very real degree as well is that, because we hold

this position, we start to believe, as each generation goes by, that we're entitled to that position, that we deserve that position, that that position can never be removed, but is that true, friends?

No, when you go and read the original covenant, and now as Jeremiah is reviewing that covenant with a much-later generation than Moses, we find, indeed, that he's reminding the people that, again, he's saying, "Listen, the fact of the matter is that God's covenants, all of God's covenants, by the way, not just the Old Covenant but the original covenant He made with Adam and Eve and then with Noah, and with others, all the way through to the New Testament or the New Covenant, has always been conditional--"if." D

do you see that key word that comes over and over in that passage? "If, if, if, if, then," so the two key words that we find there is "if," "then." "If you obey me," "If you put your full trust in me," "If you follow my ways and my statutes," "If you worship me and search for me with all your heart and with your soul, then, then I will bless you," God says. "Then I will establish you. Then I will give you a bright future, and I will bless your labors and the works of your hands. Then I will give you fruitfulness and children and livestock and reproduction and prosperity, all these things, then I will do these things for you," and not only that, but then, God knows that that will also attract other people into his kingdom as well, that other people from other nations will come and say, "I want a piece of this. I want to be able to see what is it that gives you such wisdom and understanding and blessing and prosperity," and then we can share with them the Word of the Lord.

We can share with them the truth, and we can share with them the covenant, and also God had positioned and intended for Israel to always be in that position, not only for their blessing only as some kind of exclusive club that He had decided to carve out separate from all the people groups of the world, no. He wanted them to be the people group that would expand until all nations, until all nations came into the kingdom of God and wanted to have a piece of Israel as well. And so they also had a mission. They had a purpose. They had a function that they lost sight of way too fast, way too often, and the Christian church in its history, really, has the same very difficult, very shortcoming past and history even as Israel did as well.

And so, when we come to the gospels of Jesus, we find the same predicament there as well. When we come to Jesus and His gospels and His writings and His talks with the people and the religious leaders and the religious population of the Jewish people of His day, they also came to believe that their position was one in which they were entitled to. "We are the children of Abraham, therefore, we are entitled to eternal life, therefore, we are entitled to the kingdom of God." And Jesus says, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, you forget what the covenant really is. It is a conditional covenant. If you search and love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind, and you'll love your neighbor as yourself, then you are a member of God's kingdom."

Not everybody that is a descendant of Jew is a permanent eternal Jew. That's what Jesus taught. That's what the apostle Paul and the rest of the apostles taught as well, and so Jeremiah is really addressing, and the Lord through Jeremiah is addressing to his generation the very same predicament that existed during Jesus's generation as well as I'm sure we could look at many generations of the history of Israel. So coming back to the same passage, I think we ended up, what, verse 8? Let's continue on. Okay, so we ended at verse 7, sorry. So there we have Jeremiah reviewing the basics of the conditions of the covenant that God had cut with Israel back in Moses's day in Deuteronomy, and then in verse 8, it says, "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit." So there's that word "lying" again.

Okay, so verse 4, we already said, "Do not trust in these lying words, 'The temple, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,'" and then verse 8, again, he repeats "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit." Verse 9, we're going to find that entitlement language there again, even as God is pointing out there error. In verse 9, it says, "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know?"

And so, in that one verse alone, God is addressing six commandments that are being broken, six sins that

the Israelites in Jeremiah's generation are guilty of committing. Okay, we have murder, we have adultery, we have lying, we have burning incense or to Baal, which is to bow down to false idols and gods, and then to walk after other gods. "You shall have no other gods before Me."

So we have--is it five or six? I said, "six," but now I'm counting. Maybe it's five, steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense, oh, and walk after other-- so there's six altogether, yeah. And then, verse 10, it says, "and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?"

And so God is pointing out that they have come to this misunderstanding that the devil has duped them into believing something that really is not true, and, of course, all through the Bible, especially in the New Testament, we find that the devil is pointed out as the one that is the great deceiver, and, indeed, he has deceived Jeremiah's generation into believing that they are entitled to the kingdom. They are entitled to be the chosen ones, they're entitled to be able to be God's special people, a treasure upon all the earth, just because they are the physical, genetic descendants of Abraham. And God says, "Have I really chosen you to be able to commit all these abominations, all these different sins," in their lives, "and still be entitled to eternal life to My kingdom? Is that really the deal? Is that the covenant that I really cut with you so many years ago?"

And so God, of course, knows the answer. He knows the answer is "No," but He's trying to wake up the consciousness and the minds of the generation of Jeremiah's day. And so there's two things that they believe that entitled them to the kingdom, number one, that they were descendants of Abraham, and, number two, that they had the only real true temple of the true God of heaven. Now, did they worship the true God of heaven? Yes. Was the temple that was in Jerusalem the only true temple of true religion? Yes.

Okay, does that mean that God gives us a license to be able to sin and continue to continue in sin unrepentant and still be able to be part of God's kingdom for all of eternity as long as we're in the right church on the right day with the right book and doing some of the right things? No. Okay, we need to be able to walk through the doors of our church every Sabbath, including today, and know that we have searched out God with all our heart, our soul, and our mind, and that we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and body, amen, and that we have determined to be able to obey God as He writes His law upon our hearts, that we have determined to avoid adultery, that we have determined to avoid murder, that we have determined to avoid worshiping other gods, that we have determined to be able to obey God in all ways in which He has revealed to you and me.

And so this is what Jeremiah is addressing in his day, and, again, he's reflecting the blessings and the curses that are found in the book of Deuteronomy. As you go to Deuteronomy chapter 27 and Deuteronomy chapter 28, we find there that famous scene where God, kind of, splits up the 12 tribes of Israel and says, "Now, six on this mountain and across the valley where you can see each other on the other mountaintop, I want the other six tribes to stand." And one of them was to proclaim the blessings of God if they embrace the covenant that God was cutting with them, that they would embrace the statutes and the commandments and love God with all their heart, their soul, and their strength, and as they represented that one group on one mountain, then we have the others that would represent the curses, "But if you decide not to obey Me, not to follow Me, not to put your trust in Me, not to be able to make Me your Lord and your Savior from day to day, then these are the curses that will take place upon you and your people and upon the land, and one day, I will cast you out."

And so they proclaimed--one side proclaimed the great blessings of God, and the other side on the other mountain proclaimed the great blessings, that potential that God had invited them to enter into. This is what Jeremiah is reflecting upon from the book of Deuteronomy, not only that but also the song of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 32. We have the song of Moses.

So God not only gave a book as a testimony and witness against them, okay, and against the

unfaithfulness God knew was in their future, but then God also gave them a song, and so we have the song of Moses in that chapter, chapter 32, and so we have this long, extensive, very dreary song. It's not the very best song that you could--it's not the one that you want to sing to your children just before they go to sleep, you know, and to give them sweet dreams, no, because, really, it's a song that was a witness against them, and so God is not doing this to be able to rub it in, of course.

God doesn't give this particular song to be able to make things difficult or to discourage His people, but, of course, as God does in all His purposes, He's doing it to be able to help them avoid making that mistake in the first place. And so He even gives them not only a book but a song. There's something about a song. Have you ever realized that we can, you know, as research and personal experiences tells us that, when we have a-- when we're trying to memorize verses or in the Bible or other lyrics and so on, when you put in the lyrics and you put it to a tune, and the tune is catchy enough, that you can actually remember those verses in the Bible better and easier. They can come back to your mind quicker, and so God knew that, of course, far before we ever discovered and researched it, and so He also put these words in a song. And so that's Tuesday's lesson as God is speaking to Jeremiah's generation and repeating some of the original words that God had first put in the original covenant that's found in Deuteronomy.

All right, let's go to Monday's lesson, which is Deuteronomy chapter 10, in verse 12. Let's go to Monday's lesson, and we're going to go to Deuteronomy chapter 10, in verse 12, in our Bibles. Deuteronomy chapter 10... and verse 12. In Deuteronomy chapter 10, in verse 12, it says, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

Now, we don't want to miss out on those last three words. In fact, those last three words is what I highlighted in my most prominent color as I use my different Bible highlighters in my Bible, why? Because God is not a party pooper, and He keeps repeating that over and over and over as He calls us to obey Him.

You know, the devil is continually--our carnal nature and the devil and the world is continually trying to condition us and trying to convince us of the lie that life is worse off if you start to restrict yourselves from the sins and the pleasures of this world, and you follow only the narrow pathway which God has set before us, to keep God's commandments, to obey Him, to follow His statutes, His ways and His holiness. And God continually is counteracting that because He knows that is the most popular, most sought-after, most bought-into lie that the devil brings to you and I as human beings, that life is better without all of God's commandments restricting us, that life is much more fuller, and there's much more of a party to be had without His ways always getting in the way, but God is saying, "No, that's not true, absolutely, completely, categorically wrong. It is a lie. Do not believe that deception. Following God and His ways and His statutes is for our own good.

You know, in the Psalms, it says that "God," says, "withholds no good thing from you and I." God gives us His "law of liberty" as the book of James calls it. When we go to 1 John chapter 5, he says, "He who keeps His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome," why? Because, when you come into the Lord and you follow the Lord according to His Spirit in your heart--of course, you have to have His Holy Spirit to experience the blessing. If you try to keep God's law and His statutes and His ways and His judgments without the Holy Spirit, then it can be a very unpleasant experience, and you can turn into a very unpleasant, religious person, but if you have the Holy Spirit in your heart, accompanied by the statutes and the will and the commandments of God, and you follow that narrow pathway that God has set before you, you will find the greatest peace, the fullest love, the greatest joy that you could ever find in this life. You cannot find the joy at the capacity that you could find on the pathway that God calls us, to lead us with, and walk with Him.

Do you believe that, friends? It is for your good. I looked in the margin here, and my Hebrew scholars tell me here that that word "good," that is translated into our English language here is also legitimately

translated as "benefit" or "welfare," "for your benefit," "for your welfare." God has our best interest in mind. Do you believe that? I hope you do believe it because the lie is much more popularly embraced. Many more people, including some churchgoers, including some Seventh-day Adventists, embrace the lie to some capacity or another, but God is telling us that the closer we live by the statutes and the commandments and the ways that He sets before us, the more blessed we will be, the greater our joy will be.

God has our best-- Jesus, John chapter 10, verse 10, the very first verse that I've been like a broken record-- you probably heard me say-- if you've heard me teach before, I've said it more than once, John 10:10, my signature verse, Jesus says, "The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and destroy, but I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Do you believe that? Jesus came to give us life. He's always offered us life.

Now, when Jesus came, He didn't offer life for the first time to His generation. He said it again, but it was repeated dozens and dozens of times already from Moses, all the way through the Old Testament. God has always offered mankind abundant life. God has always had that available to us, and He has always done His best to be able to reveal the liar, and the accuser, the deceiver, the enemy of our souls, and the enemy of all that is good. He is always trying to counteract that by saying, "Don't believe the lie. He is a thief. He comes to steal and to kill and destroy." For every commandment and every statute and every direction that God gives you in the Bible, the devil comes along and says, "Your life will be better if you don't follow that direction." T

hat is a direct lie from hell itself. Satan is trying to convince you of something that is absolutely categorically not true. God gives us the best life, and that life is found in the holy Word of God, in the commandments and the statutes and the covenant that He brings to you and I. Verse 14, Monday, it points out, and he says, "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also all the earth that is in it."

In other words, when we stand with God, not only He's a loving, caring, compassionate, and merciful God that wants the very best life for you, that wants you to have the greatest joy that you can possibly find in this life, but that doesn't mean that every life is going to-- every day is going to be a rose garden. I don't want you to get that wrong. God doesn't want you to get that wrong either. You know, the devil also has another lie: "If you follow God and His ways and His commandments and His statutes and you give your heart to Him, then everything is going to go just like smooth as roses, and you're never going to have a sad day. You're never going to have a down day." Well, that's not true. Jesus had down days. He's on record of crying more than once, so that's another lie, and then people come in, and they realize, "Wait a minute, how come, you know, how come everything's not roses now?" And then the devil says, "Yeah, you're right. You better just leave the whole thing. Scrap it."

See, the devil has all kinds of different angles and lies and deceptions that he tries to bring to you and I that he might be able to derail us from the only true pathway through the narrow gate that Jesus sets before us. That's why we're reading the book of Deuteronomy to be able to find some of these truths and now as we look at some of the later prophets that are also reflecting on these important truths. "Indeed, heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth and all that is in it." Everything belongs to the Lord. The heaven of heavens--now, some people get confused when it talks about the different heavens of the Bible.

You know, there's three heavens that the Bible writers understood and used that term for, and if you haven't learned that, this'll be helpful for you. The first heaven is the one that's described in the first chapter of Genesis when God created on the second day the atmosphere. He separated the waters from the sky from the waters on the earth, and He created a perfect "atmosphere" as we call it.

In the New Testament, I mean, the New King James Version and the King James Version, they'll call it the "firmament," but as we go, I think it's verse 8, Genesis chapter 1, in verse 8, you'll find there that God also calls that "firmament," what we typically call the "atmosphere," it calls it "heaven," and so the first

application of the word "heaven" is in the first chapter of the Bible, and it refers to what we call the "atmosphere," okay? So the second heaven is "the heavens," and that applies to the stars, the sky, the solar system, the Milky Way, this part of the galaxy or this part of the universe, I should say, in which we make up part of the Milky Way, and so that would be called "the heavens."

You know, on one of the last days, it was the fourth or fifth of the Genesis creation record that God created the sun, the moon, and the stars. That's "the heavens," and so that's the second application of "heaven." And so sometimes it's referred to as "heaven," more often as "heavens," and then, of course, the third application is the one that you and I thought of as soon as we read "heaven," and that is where God's headquarters is, where His throne is, where the angels abide, where the holy temple of the New Testament is located.

This is the headquarters of the entire universe, and that's the third application of "heaven," the one that we most commonly think of, and so when, here, Moses is writing here, and he says, "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth and all that is in it," he's referring to most likely, "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens," he's probably talking about the atmosphere and "the heavens," this part of the universe, our galaxy and the Milky Way, so this neck of the universe.

Now, of course, there's other ones that say that, you know, God is present is everywhere, and, of course, there's lots of references to the headquarters of the universe as well. This brings up another point I'd like to share with you as well, and that is that heaven is the headquarters of where God is located, but it's not some kind of fourth dimension.

I think, sometimes, because we bought into this other false teaching and understanding that, when we die, there's an invisible part of us called the spirit or the soul that consciously continues to live on and either goes to hell or to heaven immediately after death or to purgatory and some of these other religious teachings that were developed and, really, based upon Aristotle, Plato, and some of these original, outstanding Greek philosophers-- and so that philosophy and a lot of people that were indoctrinated with these Greek philosophers brought this false teaching that, when we die, we don't really die.

There's an invisible part of us, a pure, eternal soul that continues to consciously live on, and so, because of that, we believe that that goes to some kind of fourth dimension somewhere because you can't see the soul. It just--you know, when you die, it leaves your body and goes to heaven, which must be some kind of fourth dimension or something of that nature, but, really, no, God's headquarters is beyond our telescopes. It's more than a couple hundred light years away, but it's somewhere in the physical universe, and that's where God is headquartered today.

You know, the good news is-- and this is a sideline. If you go to Revelation, the very last chapter, it tells us that God is going to move His headquarters from wherever it is in another corner of the universe right now, and He's going to move that right here upon this planet made new, and God's throne is going to dwell here, and God will be our temple, and we will be able to worship Him face-to-face, and every single Sabbath, all flesh will come together and worship before the Lord. What an awesome experience. What an awesome future you and I have together, don't we?

I can't wait until the Lord comes. I can't wait until we receive those new bodies and we receive that eternal life and that we're able to see each other and know that we'll never say good-bye to each other ever again because we will always be able to cross paths and reconnect for all of eternity, and that's the hope and the future that God has given to us. Interesting, as we go to verse 16, and this is not part of it, but I just want to read verse 15 and 16. I know that it doesn't point us to 15 and 16, but I want to invite you to come there with me. In verse 15, we are invited to go to there. It says, "The Lord delighted only in your fathers, to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, and you above all peoples, as it is this day."

Now, again, we don't want to take that out of context, and some people have, and there's this very common evangelical misunderstanding as well today is that God had kind of chose--our evangelical

friends have actually given the position to Israel, in a large way, that Israel had mistakenly received during Jesus's generation and Jeremiah's generation and others-- is that they were the chosen people, they were entitled to be the chosen people, they were entitled to that position, and no matter what they did, no matter what choices they made, they will always hold that position, that it was unconditional.

Our evangelical friends give Israel that unconditional position once again in their modern theology doctrine and prophecies. That is biblically not true. That is absolutely not true. God repeats it several times as we've already read in different examples in Deuteronomy, forward, as well as during the teachings of Jesus, during the teachings of the apostles as well. Verse 16, it goes on and says, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."

Now, that's not the first time--I remember, as I first read through Deuteronomy for the first time after I was baptized in 1992, and I just consumed the Bible, consumed the Word of God. I remember, in 1992-- you know, we have the number of people being baptized during the worship service today. It always brings back memories, you know, when my wife and I walked into those baptismal waters in 1992, and after we got out of those waters, my friends, we just took this Bible, and we began to just gobble it up, and we began to read the Old Testament in the morning. Every morning, we would get up, and we would-- before we went to work, we would read four to five chapters of the Old Testament, starting with Genesis. Then before we went to bed, we would read four to five chapters of the New Testament before we went to sleep.

And we did that every single night until, a year and a half later, we had made our way all the way through the Old Testament, and we had made our way through the New Testament four times because it's about a quarter the size, and so we just kept recycling in the evening, and so, a year and a half later, we had read through the New Testament four times, the Old Testament once. If you have never read the Word of God and made it your own, make sure that you do that starting today. Don't rely on your pastors only. Don't rely on your church. You need to make this Word yours. God is all.

You know, Peter said that we are called to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood. All of us are to be priests and ambassadors for God, and so, if your neighbor asks you able the Bible and they ask you questions about the prophecies of Daniel or Revelation, you need to be able to have an answer as well.

Now, if you were just baptized, of course, your answers are not going to be readily available as those of you who have been in the church for 10 or 20 years, but if you've been an Adventist for 10 or 20 years, you should be able to answer almost every question that your neighbor asks you about Daniel, about Revelation, about the teachings of Jesus. You need to make the Word your own. Verse 16, I remember, when I read that.

Now, I had already read through the book of Romans, and sure enough, in the book of Romans, we find there that Paul writes and talks about how important it is to be circumcised of the heart. He says a Jew is not a Jew unless they have been circumcised, not only of the flesh but of the heart. We find that in Romans 2, verse 29. Romans chapter 2, in verse 29, Paul says, "but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, a circumcision that is of the heart," and when I read that, I thought, "Wow, that's really deep," and God is saying, "Listen, it's not the outward that's the most important. What's most important is what's on the inside."

Being religious on the outside is not worth anything if we're not religious on the inside, if we don't really have a religious experience with God in our hearts, and so I thought, "That's pretty deep," and then I went to Deuteronomy, and as I was reading through that book, I was like, "Wow, Paul didn't come up with that for the first time." In fact, I'm sure that the Holy Spirit had inspired Paul to reflect upon a book that was very near and dear to Paul's heart and his mind and which was the book of Deuteronomy, and so we find here, again, that, in the later writings, even in the New Testament, that God had inspired the prophets of the New Testament to reflect upon what God had already revealed through Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, and so, again, verse 16, we find that God is speaking to the generation of Moses, and he says, "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."

Well, friends, with our last couple of minutes here, we're not going to be able to have time to be able to look at all that, and so maybe I just-- not going to be able to do it justice. I was hoping to be able to spend some time in 2 Kings chapter 22, and there we find that Josiah is going through a massive renovation project of the temple because of the apostasy of his dad and his grandfather. For 57 years before that, the whole nation just went down the tube religiously, theologically, spiritually, morally, and Josiah was able to reverse that course for a time.

Unfortunately, he started reversing it too late, and God says, "Listen, I know you're going to reverse it. You're going to slow down the ship, but it's still going to hit the iceberg. It's still going to go down." But God used Josiah in a very powerful way, and part of that reformation was the fact that the high priest, as they were going through the renovations and opening different drawers and cabinets or whatever that they hadn't opened for a long time, came by this book that was called the Book of the Law, and that would certainly include Deuteronomy.

It probably also included Leviticus, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, because Deuteronomy is a summary of those three books, and so apparently the whole nation and even the priesthood hadn't been exposed to the covenant that's recorded in the book of Deuteronomy by Moses, and so Jeremiah heard it. He read it. He had it read to him by the Shaphan, the scribe, and then the king himself read it publicly before all the elders, the officers, and the most important leaders of Israel, and that began a very powerful reformation that, again, slowed the course, but, unfortunately, the course was set, and they were already-- they weren't able to reverse it completely before Babylon came in and took them captive.

So, fascinating story. If you haven't read it, you haven't gone through your quarterly study, go through 2 Kings chapter 2--or chapter 22. Very important story there in concern to Deuteronomy. Well, friends, it was nice to be able to study with you again here today. Again, the time went way faster than I would've liked, but as they say, "Time flies when you're having-- when you're having fun," and so I hope it went fast for you as well, friends, as we study together, as we look at the Word of God, and it's something that you're excited about as much as I am.

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So until next week, we thank you for joining us, and we pray that God will bless the rest of your day.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want and, most important, to share it with others.

Ashley: I grew up in Northern New Jersey, just about 35 minutes out of New York City, and I grew up in a famous family. And so my father played for the New York Giants for nine years. That's how we ended up where we were. He also played for the San Francisco 49ers, and he was in the Pro Bowl. He won two Super Bowls. And I also had an older brother who played professional baseball, so I had a lot to live up to. Everything we did was based around sports. That was my life, and I loved it, but inside I was--I struggled daily with insecurity, lacking confidence. You know, I would look at myself in the mirror and not-- and would not see good things about myself.

I started to put all my energy into soccer, and I decided that I was going to go far with that. So I ended up

getting a scholarship to play in the University of Miami. I was being pulled in these, like, two directions of, you know, wanting to live this party lifestyle with my teammates, and I was so engulfed in soccer and school, but I also had this, like, strong yearning, desire to serve God, and I was just struggling to figure out the balance and how to do that.

I was in Sin City, in Miami, and I couldn't-- I felt like I was swimming upstream, and I just felt like I couldn't breathe. I had everything everyone would've wanted. I had everything. I had a scholarship to pay for school. I was playing a sport. I was the captain of my team. I was in Miami. I was--I had a great family. I had a lot of friends, but where was God? It was--all of that is meaningless unless I had Him. And the lifeline that He gave me was this soft whisper in my ear, saying, "Go." I just remember, "Go."

So I decided to go, and I spent two months in Kenya and two months in Uganda, and God was saving me by sending me there. It was God's prescription for my life, for my existence. When I returned from Africa, I went back to school. I finished school, finished soccer. I went to the University of Tennessee to get my master's when I met my husband. Our motto in life was we wanted to live in reckless abandon for our Creator and whatever that was, whatever that looked like, and you know, we've traveled, and we've done mission work, but we've mostly been in Tennessee, and when we--we spent the summer apart.

A year after that, we were married, and it was the summer of 2015, when we came back together, he's like, "I have some things I want to share with you. I want you to listen to this." And we were on a 14-hour car ride, and he just started playing this "Prophecy Code" all the way back from 2005, and it was so clear, and I just was comprehending it so well. You know, after a couple, like, three or four, I was like, "I need a break. My mind is going to explode from all this, like, information overload," and everything that I thought I had known about the Bible and about Scripture is just completely different.

I was in shock. Everything that I was hearing, it was like Scripture is proving Scripture is proving Scripture. My heart was, like, changing in that car ride because it's like learning more about God than I ever had before. After that car ride and after listening to the whole "Prophecy Code," my life was completely changed. He's become more real to us than He ever had been before, and that has pushed us to disciple and to minister to others and share with them what we know. My name is Ashley, and I want to thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: Amazing Facts changed lives.

Female: By the time I got to high school, abuse was just a way of life for me. I just thought that that was the way it was and that many people were going through that, and I found out that a lot of the girls were not going through the abuse that I was going through. I started acting out and playing up and misbehaving in school. I felt, when I spoke to Mom, she was too busy worrying about where Dad was, what Dad was doing. When I spoke to the older siblings, they couldn't be bothered. I had stupid questions. I seemed to feel very lonely all the time, and I just forgot at that point where God was and felt that I didn't need Him because, anyway, when I did need Him, He was never around for me.

I was living a very, very busy life working till 2, 3 o'clock in the morning and then drinking alcohol till 5 o'clock so that I could get to sleep for a few hours, wake up and then get back to work at 8 o'clock at night. So my life continued and spiraled until I decided I needed to do something different, so I packed my bags and spent 11 months crossing Africa from Zimbabwe, all the way through to Switzerland.

Met a lady in a missionary who spoke to me about God and gave me a Bible, and that was when I started thinking again that "God, maybe You led me on this trip," and that was the start of me really rethinking, "What am I doing with my life?" I'd made a decision that "God, this time, I'm never going to let You go. I know You've never let me go. It was always me who let go." My return to Jesus was the most amazing feeling that I'd ever experienced. I felt as if this time I'd made a connection with God.

Announcer: Together, we have spread the gospel much farther than ever before. Thank you for your support.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Male: When I was 15, I bought my first bag of marijuana out of curiosity, and from the age of 15, on to 23, was a constant experimentation with different substances. By the time I was 23, there was not a drug I had not tried. I had worn myself out, searching for happiness, and one day I came home, tired as usual, and I started drinking, and as usual, after I started drinking, I started looking for a higher buzz. Someone came by with some Xanax. Someone also came by with something else that I liked, and that was cocaine. This time, not thinking, I took the whole thing.

So I went to bed about 5 in the afternoon. My roommate went off to work that night. When he came back from work the next day, though, he noticed something was wrong because I was still in bed in the same position. He tried to wake me up, and he couldn't wake me up. And when my parents found me, they found me curled up in a fetal position in my hospital room, unconscious still, and I stayed unconscious in this coma-like state for the next week. I stayed the next month in the hospital, slowly getting better to where I could sit up in bed, and I had to learn to walk again, but my parents found this one facility out in the hills of Tennessee.

I had to admit that I liked the place, but they were Christian, and even worse than that, I said, "Yes," when they asked me if I wanted to go to church that week. Before the pastor said the benediction, I was so excited because I was planning my escape. And so, after everybody was all in bed that night, I made sure that they were snoring and that they were asleep. I went into the kitchen and stole a few bananas, got my backpack ready. I figured I could get sober on my own. My favorite song was "I Did It My Way."

Of course, my definition of "sober" was a nice supply of marijuana each day and alcohol on the weekends, and, of course, if I had a bad hangover, I might need some of those relaxing pills to take, but other than that, that would be it. So here I am, stranded on the street in the big city of Houston. My bag of clothes is gone, my cell phone was gone, my wallet, my bus ticket's gone. I don't have anything but the shirt on my back.

It's at that point that this man comes up to me, this mysterious man. He's actually very short and appears to be homeless, and he led me to some food and even a place to stay that night. Looking back, it is my firm conclusion that that was an angel. So my dad was able to come down to Houston and pick me up and take me back up to the health retreat at Wildwood in Tennessee. They had a satellite. On this channel, there was a man named Doug Batchelor. I liked what I heard. I liked the way he explained the Bible. It was so simple, and he also had an experience similar to mine, and I had talked to Lou about him, and they happened to have a whole set of cassette tapes. I would wake up at 4 in the morning sometimes, and I would get up, and I would watch two of those videos before breakfast. I would sit this close to the TV, watching what Doug Batchelor was saying, just eating up every word of it.

I was so tired of hearing lies and even believing my own lies that it was so wonderful to find something that was solid and that I could rely on. And so, when I got home from rehab, in my local church, Eric Flickinger from Amazing Facts was holding an evangelistic series. They solidified my conviction, and it was then I made the absolute decision to follow Jesus.

I praise the Lord Jesus Christ for Amazing Facts. I praise God for Amazing Facts because they're so Bible-based. They send out evangelists who are willing to teach the truth to people. I'm thankful that they're preaching right now all over the world, changing lives, just as they changed mine.

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