

Learning from History

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[0 : 0 0] dear god thanks so much for your word the bible i thank you that you continue to speak to us through it and so far as we look at this um i guess pretty old book that you would help us to know what you are saying to us but more than that to live in light of it for we ask it in jesus name amen well i wonder what you think um about history uh is there history that is worth knowing and if so why so on the next slide we've got martin luther king and it says history makes us it tells us you know who we are gives us our place in the world as mark was saying it shapes us in other words or in the next slide uh irish philosopher and statesman edmund burke said uh he said that those who don't know history are destined to repeat it in other words we can learn from history and so the two reasons that you just came up with and we know this ourselves in our own lives with our own personal history i mean we learn from things that we've done in the past i mean when i wash clothes now i separate colors from whites um because well i did what this next photo did the stormtrooper pink stormtrooper um we learn from our mistakes don't we history teaches us things and today we're going to go back in history as we start the book of deuteronomy and consider some of israel's history and i want to suggest to you that israel's history is worth knowing uh not just because it teaches us things but because it's also part of our own history you see what has happened to them has actually impacted us often when we come to the old testament there's this disconnect it's so old so long ago about different people with different practices but you see what has happened to them has actually impacted us now i mean after all jesus came from israel and saved us i mean that's a pretty big impact their god is our god we are both called the people of god you see we have a connection with them and so their history ought to matter to us their history has shaped us and it can still teach us what's more the book of deuteronomy begins with moses giving the current generation of israel a history lesson for themselves but before we get to moses's history lesson we need to remember the story so far so about 470 years before deuteronomy god called a man named abraham and made three big promises to him and the helpful way to remember it is the tennis shot now who plays tennis here does anyone play tennis got a few hands what do you call the shot that goes over someone's head lob okay that's the way to remember it so on the next slide i don't know if i'm showing this for the three big blessings that are three big promises rather land offspring lots of people great nation and blessing they're the three big promises that god made to abraham and the rest of genesis god blesses abraham with wealth and a growing family he gets to about 70 people in the extended family but then they end up in egypt because there was famine in the land and only egypt had food because god worked through joseph you might remember that story and then while in egypt israel grew from 70 to thousands so on the next slide we read from exodus chapter 1 that the israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous so that the land was filled with them i don't know if the narrator could set it any other way it's quite clear that there were loads of them you see god was keeping the o promise of lob offspring descendants great nation so many in fact that the new king of egypt the new pharaoh got scared and decided to make them slaves so god then rescued them from egypt

to bring them into their own land the I promise of lob and so in the rest of the book of exodus you have the 10 plagues that forced pharaoh to release the people you've got the parting of the red sea you've got the 10 commandments at mount sinai or horrib as it's often called in deuteronomy same place two different names that's the book of exodus and there was more laws given in the book of leviticus and then the israelites came to the promised land at the land of canaan and this first time they came to the really southernmost border so on the next slide we've got a map egypt on the left now we think they might have crossed the red sea around where it says the red sea and sinai is somewhere in that area some people think it's down the bottom but then they went up to the red dot to kadesh barnea and canaan is in the top right hand corner it's between the jordan river which is

the blue line and the mediterranean sea it's that strip of land all up down there that's canaan and so kadesh barnea the red dot is at the southernmost end of the promised land but when they got there they refused to go in they refused to trust god and so instead of entering the land they entered back into the desert and wandered around for 40 years until that unbelieving generation died out and a new generation grew up and it's this new generation that moses is now speaking to they have come back to the promised land and they're actually where the green dot is on the east side of the jordan facing jericho it's probably more in the land of moab than amon i think moab goes up a bit but that's where this new generation are when moses gives this sermon because that's what the book of deuteronomy actually is it's one long sermon that moses gives to this new generation while they're parked beside the promised land where that green dot is and we and we get this idea of a sermon from our bible so if you got your bibles there chapter 1 verse 1 these are the words that moses spoke to all israel in the wilderness east of the jordan that's where they are and verse 3 in the 40th year after the 40 years of wandering on the first day of the 11th month moses proclaimed to the israelites all that the lord had commanded him concerning them or verse 5 east of the jordan in the territory of moab moses began to expound this law saying dot dot dot notice the words spoke proclaimed expounded god's law a god's law back then referred to the first few books of the bible in other words moses expounded or explained god's word to them that's what deuteronomy is about and he calls them to trust god and to choose life and that and that's what a sermon is meant to be it's expounding god's word and calling for a response that's why i get you to look at your bibles and explain it to you and then call for response from you because that's what a sermon a sermon is i know for some of you reading the bible is hard work and it does require effort but it's the way we get to know god it's the way we encourage to trust god and this is what moses is doing here to encourage the people he gives them a sermon i don't know if i've told you this story before but uh at church after a church service one day a little boy came up to a pastor and said when i grow up i'm going to give you all my money and the pastor replied oh thank you that's nice but why the little boy replied well my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers he's ever heard moses though is not a poor preacher but he does give a sermon and it starts with a history lesson for this current generation you know the green dot so that they might learn from their history and this history lesson begins point one verse six with the command to go to the land have a look there in your bibles verse six the lord our god said to us at horeb you have stayed long enough at this mountain break camp and advance into the hill country of the amorites go to all the neighboring peoples in the arabah in the mountains in the western foothills in the negev and along the coast in other words everywhere to the land of the canaanites and to lebanon as far as the great river the euphrates why well verse eight i have given you this land go in take possession of the land the lord swore he would give your fathers that is abraham isaac and jacob and their descendants after them now moses is talking about that first generation who first left egypt the parents and he reminds the current generation the children of how god said to their parents to leave sinai leave horeb and go to the promised land but when you look at it it's a pretty boring bit of history to start with isn't it i mean why does moses start here and not the spectacular crossing of the red sea or the plagues i mean that's where hollywood would start so why does he remind the current generation about this part of their history well you see god has already rescued them from egypt and so they don't need to be reminded about that but they haven't taken the land yet and so that's what they need to be reminded about in other words moses starts with the past promise that is most relevant to their present situation the land so that they might be encouraged to take the land that god has already given them it's theirs the question is though can they trust that promise and can they trust god to make good on his promise to give them this land that it is actually theirs because at face value taking the land looks impossible and so the next bit of history moses reminds them about is the appointment of the leaders and it actually encourages them to trust his promise have a look point to verse 9 at that time i said to you you are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone the lord your god has increased your numbers so that today you're as numerous as the stars in the sky may the lord the god of your ancestors increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised but how can i bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself i choose some wise understanding and respected men from each of your tribes and i will set them over you as leaders the people said sounds good so that's what moses did in the rest of verse 15 and following now again it's a bit of an odd bit of history to remind this current generation about isn't it i mean do they really care about the fact that moses had to appoint leaders among their parents to stop disputes i mean i'd just be ashamed you know that i just had to do that why does moses then remind them

about this bit of history well because that bit of history actually shows god keeps his promises you see why does mooses need to appoint leaders why does he need help in the first place because verse 10 the lord has increased their numbers so much that they're as numerous as the stars in other words god has kept the o part of his promises to abraham of lob the promise of offspring in fact the language that mooses uses here is very similar to the language god used to abraham back in genesis so on the next slide from genesis 22 so if you can pick the similarity i will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky mooses deliberately uses the same language here to remind them that god has actually kept one of his promises already he reminds them of this bit of history to show them that god has kept the promise of offspring he's increased their numbers and if he's already kept one promise already offspring then you can trust he will keep his other promise of land that's why he refers to this bit of history but will they trust god well to encourage them to do so mooses then reminds them of another part of history that is thirdly the response of their parents that first generation so point three verse 19 over the page we don't have time to look at every verse so just skip over to verse 19 then as the lord our god commanded us we set out from horeb and went down toward the hill country of the amorites through all that vast and dreadful wilderness that you have seen and so he reached kadesh baniya which was where the red dot was then i said to you you have reached the hill country of the amorites which the lord our god is giving us see the lord your god is has given you this land go up and take possession of it as the lord the god of your ancestors told you do not be afraid do not be discouraged well the people decide first well let us send some men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns that we will come to the ideas seem good to me said mooses so i selected 12 of you one man from each tribe they left and went up into the hill country and they came to the valley of eshkol and explored it taking with them some of the fruit of the land they brought it down to us and reported it is a good land that the lord our god is giving us but verse 26 you were unwilling to go up you rebelled against the command of the lord your god you grumbled in your tents and said the lord hates us so he brought us out of egypt to deliver us into the hands of the amorites to destroy us where can we go our brothers have made our hearts melt in fear the spies they say the people are stronger and taller than we are and the cities are large with walls up to the sky we even saw the anachites there which were a race of giants well three big people at least so on the next slide our map again remember the first generation they came from the bottom from sinai and they traveled if hopefully you can see that the dotted blue line up there up to kadesh barnea and when they reached there they sent spies into the land so hit next so the spies went up into the land and then they came back and did a report and the report was yeah it is a good land but the people are giants and the cities are fortified and so verse 26 this first generation were unwilling to obey verse 26 they rebelled against god verse 27 they grumbled in their tents now to be fair it was a daunting job i mean giants fortified cities you know it's it's a bit overwhelming really isn't it it looked like an impossible task and so mooses encouraged that first generation again and then tried to persuade them in other words he gave them another chance to trust in god have a look at verse 29 mooses repeats himself do not be terrified do not be afraid of them and then he reminds them verse 30 the lord your god who is going before you will fight for you as he did for you in egypt before your very eyes and in the wilderness there you saw how the lord your god carried you as a father carries his son all the way you went until you reached this place he says mooses says remember what god did for you back in egypt remember the spectacular way in which he rescued you this first generation they were actually there they saw it with their own eyes and mooses saying if god can part the red sea if he can hail down hailstones on the egyptians if he can lead you by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night then he can deal with those giants he can deal with those fortified cities like jericho and so this first generation had every reason to trust and obey but verse 32 in spite of all this you did not trust in the lord your god who went ahead of you on your journey in fire by night and in cloud by day to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go you see this is the heart of the matter despite all they had seen all that god had done for them they still did not trust and so they did not obey and in the end they missed out i remember when i was younger our mum put some afternoon tea out for us um well it wasn't for us kids it was for some visitors and she told us kids my brothers and i don't eat it i have something better for you she said of course what do we do we ate some of it i mean it was right there in front of us and we weren't sure exactly what mum had in store for us and we weren't actually sure whether it was going to be better than biscuits and cake and so we didn't really trust mum and that meant we didn't obey mum either

and because of that we rightly missed out on what mum had got for us which was some fairy floss from the church fate now remember for primary kids fairy floss is like pink gold okay but we did not fully trust her you see we didn't believe that she was something better for us well that we thought would be better and so we did not obey her and in the end we missed out so to the israelites have a look at verse 34 when the lord heard what you said he was angry and solemnly swore no one from this evil generation shall see the good land i swore to give your ancestors except caleb son of jethnah he will see it and i will give him and his descendants the land he set his foot feet on because he followed the lord wholeheartedly they will miss out on the land he says and not one of that evil generation not one person who is 20 years old or older will see it except caleb who was one of the spies why well because he followed god wholeheartedly in other words he trusted god completely of course the israelites then act like kids i mean when mum mum caught us i mean my brothers eating the biscuits and cake and told us what we were missing out on uh we tried to make up for it all put it all back my brother even tried to take some biscuit out of his mouth to put it back on the plate it was all too late of course so too with the israelites you see verse 41 then you replied we have sinned against the lord we will go up now and fight as the lord god commanded us so every one of you put on his weapons thinking it's going to be easy to go up into the hill country but the lord said to me tell them do not go up and fight because i will not be with them they've been disobedient you would be defeated by your enemies and so mooses told them and did they listen no you would not listen verse 43 but you rebelled again against the lord's command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country the amorites who lived there in those hills came out against you they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from seer all the way to homoth you came back and wept before the lord but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you and so you stayed at kadesh the red spot many days all the time you spent there and then chapter 2 verse 1 we turned back and set out toward the wilderness along the route to the red sea as the lord directed me and for a long time about 40 years they wandered the wilderness they made our way around the hill country of seer so on the next slide i think they kind of came back and they kind of just wandered around that country of seer below there i think that's around the rough area that they wandered in and

[20 : 17] here ends mooses first history lesson to that current generation mooses began with god's command to enter the land to remind them that the land is theirs mooses then reminded them about how he appointed leaders because god had already kept one of his promises of offspring so that that current generation would trust his promise about the land and then lastly mooses reminds the current generation about their parents who did not trust and so missed out on the land and he does all this so that this current generation you know that the green spot won't make the same mistake and i take it this history lesson teaches us the same thing as it did that generation on the east of the jordan that god is a god who keeps his promises and we had to trust and obey him we had to be like caleb who followed god wholeheartedly we'd be like christ the ultimate israelite who trusted god completely who trusted god completely in the wilderness during his 40 days of testing who trusted god completely in the garden of gethsemane when god said this is the only way that people's sins can be paid for and so because he trusted his heavenly father he obeyed his heavenly father even to death on a cross we had to follow christ's example and learn from israel's history the same lesson that the israelites listening to mooses's sermon were to learn to trust god even when it's hard to be on our guard and not make the same mistake that first generation did it's easy to make those mistakes that was paul's point from our second reading he refers to his first generation of israel who saw all that god had done for them yet did not trust and missed out on the promised land and so on the next slide paul writes this from our second reading these things happen to them as examples and were written down for us as warnings on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come so if you think you are standing firm be careful that you do not fall be careful to keep trusting even when it's hard if you are here today and you do not trust in jesus then please hear what god has done for you he has given his only son to die the death that we deserve to pay for our sins so that we might be forgiven and given entry into the heavenly promised land if we trust him so do you do you believe in jesus do you trust in him and for us who do trust in jesus already then we are to continue trusting in him even when it's hard and sometimes it is hard to trust god you know when we suffer or face challenges when we don't know why he's allowing us to go through this thing that's we're going through when seasons of you know suffering will seem to last forever but we must not be like that first generation who saw the giant people and the fortified cities and said no too hard to trust rather we to keep trusting like caleb like christ for god has kept his promises in the past and so he will

keep his promises in the future promises like he will never leave us nor forsake us promises like he works in all things for our good to make us like christ promises like that he hears our prayers even though sometimes it doesn't feel like it promises like he only gives good gifts when we face difficult times in life when it's hard to trust those promises we are to remember that he's kept them in the past and so we'll keep them in the future i want to finish uh by telling you about a person uh is part of our church um who's a great example and encouragement to me and to others i think and does this very thing uh this person uh suffers not from just one disease but two leukemia and parkinson's his wife suffers from ms and yet every sunday they turn up here at church when they can when their health allows and every time i say hello

this man will respond in one of two ways usually he says up when i say how are you he says up still trusting the lord or he says god is still good and you think you know how can you do that despite everything you're going through well it's because he's learned the lesson of this history he's learned that god keeps his promises and so he will keep trusting god even when it's hard let's pray that we would do the same let's pray our gracious heavenly father we pray that you would help us to keep trusting you to keep having faith believing keep trusting you and your promises even when it's difficult and sometimes it really is father help us during those times to look back in history at israel's history at our own history and to see how you have worked in our past that we might be confident that you are continuing to work in our future so father help us to keep trusting and obeying we pray in jesus name amen