



God Provides According to His Promises (Deuteronomy 9:1-10:11)

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What a text KingsWay! Our text this morning is lengthy, and with reason. The text follows a different form or flow than we usually anticipate. Usually, a sermon will be able to begin at one point and build forwards as the text unfolds, but this morning's text begins with the end, or at least the present circumstances that the Israelites were facing. And then Moses jumps backwards for the remainder of our text to help Israel see their significant failures and breaking of God's covenant, as well as God's kindness in bringing them to their present place, this place where they are knocking on the front door of Canaan so to speak. And by taking them back and explaining how the Lord has been faithful despite their rebellion, stubbornness and wickedness, Moses ends up at the end of this morning's text where he began. And so if you all will bear with me this morning, we will follow the same logic and process.

But what I ultimately pray will be one of our major takeaways as a church this morning would be to see that despite our rebellion and stubbornness toward God, which break relationship with Him, He will be true to His promises as John said in 1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

More than that not only will He be just to forgive us our sins, but He will also restore us, which is just an amazing thought. So without further ado, let's dive in.

God's Faithfulness to His Covenant Promises

Deuteronomy 9:1-6

In our opening text, Moses is busy addressing the people of God as they prepare to enter the promised land. He reminds them of God's promises while at the same time issuing a stern warning. Consider with me what the Lord is saying to His people through Moses.

You are to go in to dispossess nations. To which some rebel in the crowd would have yelled...actually it probably would have been me. Ok, "T" timeout, nations...with an "s". We are just a desert wondering nation...without an "s". But Moses wasn't done. Nations greater and mightier than you. Ok, "T" timeout. Why? That does not sound possible...but Moses wasn't done: Nations greater and mightier than you, with great cities, fortified up to heaven. Ok we're done!

But Moses continues...And the nations, that are greater and mightier than you that live in these great cities fortified up to heaven, are a people great and tall...the sons of the



Anakim...and you know and have heard it said: *"Who can stand before the sons of Anak?"* Which are the same words used by 10 of the 12 Spies after they had spied out the land, and they clearly thought no one could stand before them...The sons of Anak were the greatest and fiercest people of their day.

The very clear point to Israel was this. What you are about to do, cannot be done. Those in front of whom you are about to stand, no one can stand in front of. Those whom you are about to drive out, have never been driven out by anyone. The Anakim are only one of the nations you are about to dispossess, but really, you cannot dispossess great and mighty nations with great and fortified cities. Not in your own strength. So, I will do this, says the Lord. He will do what cannot be done by any other means.

And so I'd like to invite you this morning to consider what is your current Anakim? What situation is so big in your life right now that it just seems debilitating? Maybe it's a work situation, a child that just does not seem to want to bend the knee before God, maybe it's an interpersonal relationship with a family member or spouse that no matter how many times you talk through it, you both end up at the same place (each one of you on either side of a rift valley yelling at the other one but neither one willing to give up his hill). Whatever your situation is, if you feel like it is too big for you, I will say Amen, but I would only say we shouldn't stop there. Don't stop at "this is impossible". Take the next step, hear the words from this morning's text that reminds your soul that God is the one who will drive out before us all the things that stand between us and Him, He is the one accomplishing all things by His holy will. He will surely do it.

Now neither I nor the text is saying simply look on and do nothing. No, the Lord clearly invited Israel to do something. God was not merely saying, sit back, I will cause an earthquake or a disease of some kind to wipe them out. No God was telling Israel to go because God wanted Israel to trust that God will do this very impossible thing that He has promised to do. God is inviting them to eagerly trust and depend on Him. To use words from last week's message, God was inviting them and by extension us to remember His faithfulness in the past which would then give them hope to anticipate God's faithfulness in the future. [Do you believe that? If you don't you will miss much of what the Lord has for us in the text. When God reminds us of His past faithfulness, it is to help us to anticipate His faithfulness in the future...if we did not know that God has been faithful in the past, we would have NO HOPE that He would be faithful in the future.]

Therefor our first point this morning is: "God's faithfulness to His covenant promises" and so far, Moses has helped Israel and us to see God's covenant promises in these opening verses. i.e. Here is what God has promised to do. But knowing the hearts of the people of Israel, Moses knew that they would forget that its God's faithfulness that accomplishes and secures His covenant promises and not the other way around.

In verses 4-7 Moses wants to make very certain that the Israelites are forewarned not to think that what God is about to do is because of ANY merit on their part. On the contrary, in a moment, Moses tells them of several times when they completely failed the test and were tempted to think that what had happened was because of their own doing. And so Moses sternly warns Israel by telling them exactly who will accomplish this impossible thing three times in only two verses. Read with me:

⁴ "Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. ⁵ Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Oh Church, there will be times in our lives when we stand longing for the promised land with hope and eager expectation. We will pray, and persevere, and fast, and yearn, and in those times, by God's grace, may we be reminded that God can surely do it. But there will also be times when God graciously answers that prayer, and breakthrough comes and you see God prove Himself faithful once again, and the warning for those times is to remember that God has done this and it is not because of our righteousness.

And the reason we are warned not to think it is because of our righteousness is because this aims to take glory from the one to whom it is due and ascribe it to ourselves...this is wicked thinking and a wicked response to a faithful God. And wickedness is the very reason that God was "driving out the nations before Israel" in the first place.

And btw they clearly did not heed the warning, because they too would be driven out of the promised land for their continued rebellion and wickedness in the future when they would be driven into exile. The point is this, your and my contribution to what God accomplishes in our lives every day is not our righteousness but rather our stubbornness and rebellion.

And here Moses jumps back in time to recount multiple instances of Israel's faithless dealings with their God. Their stubborn and rebellious contributions to what God has been doing. Our first point has been "God's faithfulness to His covenant promises." and so the second point simply becomes "Israel forgot God's faithfulness to His covenant promises."

Israel forgot "God's faithfulness to His covenant promises."

Deuteronomy 9:7-24

This next section of scripture is mostly a looking back and remembering of Israel's faithlessness. And Moses starts off in verse 7 by telling them to "*Remember and do not forget*"

to which we want to say amen until we see what he tells them to remember and not forget. *"Remember and do not forget [and now Moses turns back in Israel's story] how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord."* Essentially, remember and do not forget your rebellion. Now if God says He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, why would we be encouraged to remember and not forget our rebellion against the Lord?

Because the only way to truly see and feel the weight of what God was about to do for Israel, and what God does for you and me every day, is to see it in light of, or rather in spite of our open rebellion and stubbornness. Our God is not a God who waits for our righteousness to reach a certain point where He then becomes faithful to help us persevere the rest of the way, rather God, despite our open rebellion, faithlessness, forgetfulness of His goodness, while we are dead in our trespasses and sins, says that He will still accomplish His covenant promises. He will surely do it.

Christian, if we do not remember our former state, in which we openly rebelled against and profaned the name of our Creator, if what we think we have been saved from are a few small sins, then the splendor and majesty of the cross will also remain small and distant in our hearts.....It is right for us to think about and meditate upon the cross and all that Jesus accomplished for us there. It is glorious! But doing so in isolation from, or to the exclusion of the graveness of our sins in which we once walked, will never bring about the fullness of joy and gratefulness and repentance that it should. Remembering that we were dead in our trespasses and sins magnifies the truths of the cross all the more to our own hearts and the world who are looking on.

And so, by way of helping our rebellious hearts not to forget but rather to remember our rebellion, Moses in verses 8-24 reminds the Israelites of various times where they rebelled against God. Most notably, the golden calf from Exodus 32.

In Moses' retelling of Israel's stubbornness and rebellion against God in the golden calf account, Moses says that their provoking God to anger was so severe that: v8 *"he was ready to destroy you."* Brothers and sisters, our sins are no small matter. They are so severe, that God was now intending to do to Israel what He had intended to do to the Canaanites in utterly destroying them. And this is very significant because this all happened even while Moses was on the very mountain busy receiving the initial tablets with the ten commandments from God. After God had made a covenant with you, while Moses was on the mountain receiving the very written confirmation of that covenant, you broke the covenant!!!

Therefor Moses broke the tablets when he came down from the mountain and found that the people had acted wickedly. Now this was not a situation where Moses for a moment was so surprised by Israel's wickedness that he accidentally dropped the tablets. No, he threw them to the ground in disgust as a picture of the broken relationship between Israel and God.

Israel, you have been wondering in the desert for nearly 40 years, hoping for the promised land that your God would take you to because of His covenant promises...here are the tablets confirming that covenant. But because of your wickedness (SMASH), relationship...severed. Broken in pieces. Covenant....void!

So broken was the relationship between God and His people that He says to Moses in v.12 *"Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you have brought from Egypt have acted corruptly."* God all but disowns them. This brings to mind when God said to Hosea to marry a "wife of whoredom" and then commanded Hosea in the naming of one of his sons: *"Call his name Not My People for you are not my people, and I am not your God." (Hosea 1:9)*

Church our sin SEVERES and SHATTERS relationship. The idea that our sin could drive God to the point of saying...*"you are not my people....and I am not your God"* is just...gut wrenching. But that is the consequence of our sins...it separates us from God... Oh Lord help us.

Some have said, God clearly was not truly intending to destroy Israel, for one He had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, plus He relented at some point, so it was really just a threat. Oh no it wasn't! What did Moses do immediately after shattering the tablets?

"¹⁸ Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also."

And then for his involvement as the priest who made the calf for the people...v20

"And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that He was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time."

Do you think Moses would have laid prostrate before the Lord in fear of the anger and hot displeasure of the Lord if it had merely been a threat? Romans 3:23 reminds us: *"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"*, and then in Romans 6:23: *"For the wages of sin is death..."*

Our sin deserves for all of God's righteous wrath to be poured out upon it. God is just in His very severe anger towards our rebellion, stubbornness, and sin. And Moses knew that God was not only just in wanting to destroy Israel, but if He did, nothing would remain, just like nothing remained of the golden calf.

In verse 21 Moses takes the golden calf, the physical representation of Israel's sin, and it says:



"²¹ Then I took the sinful thing, the calf that you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw the dust of it into the brook that ran down from the mountain."

Part of me wondered for a moment how wasteful. Why didn't he just melt it down and keep the gold for something else. But isn't that just like us. Let's change a bit here and there but I'd like to hold onto my sin, or at least the things that my sin acquires for me. How can I toe the line with sin...? How can I stand this side of the fence while enjoying looking at all the forbidden things on the other side of that fence....

Moses had no time for their sin or any value the gold may have had. Moses removes the sinful thing and utterly destroys it. What Moses did to the calf here is symbolic for Israel of what would happen to them if God did finally resolve to destroy them, and it is at the same time also a command of what they are to do with their sinful hearts, and the nations they are about to go in to dispossess. Put it to death and utterly destroy it. Do not accommodate sin in any way...It will lead to your utter destruction!

Now, this account of the golden calf, recounted by Moses, you would think was enough to produce a contrite heart and spirit. As they stand on the precipice of entering the promised land and hear of God's promise to go before them as a consuming fire, in light of their wickedness in making the golden calf, you would think it was enough...But as an extra measure Moses in verses 22 & 23 mentions 4 more episodes of Israel's sinful, rebellious, and stubborn dealings with God. Moses even adds another punch to the gut, so to speak in verse 24: *"You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you."* That's nearly 40 years! Ugh!

I mean you just want to shout "how many times O Israel can you fall?" And then...I think of my own sin and I think...never mind. Brothers and sisters, our sin is no small matter. It severs relationship with God, it shatters relationship with one another, it deserves to be burned with fire and to be utterly destroyed by God's just wrath. Our sin gives God the just and righteous right to say: *"you are not my people, and I am not your God."* and *"I will destroy you and blot out your name from under heaven."*

BUT...that is not the reality for believers, just as it is not what happened to Israel, because, thanks be to God, He provided to Israel a mediator to appeal to God in spite of the fact that "Israel forgot God's faithfulness to His covenant promises." And that brings us to the final point...

God provides to show His faithfulness to His covenant promises.

Deut 9:25-10:11

After recounting the Israelites' wickedness, rebellion, and stubbornness, and after the Lord all but disowns His people in saying to Moses "*your people whom you brought out of Egypt*" how does Moses (God's sovereignly provided mediator) respond?

25 "So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 And I prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand."

Moses appeals to the Lord by reminding Him that these people are His people. And I would draw our attention specifically in verse 26 to the place where Moses reminds God (if such a thing was possible) that they are His heritage.

Christian...when is the last time that you considered the fact that you are God's heritage? Just as it would have done for the Israelites, so also for us, this is supposed to be one of the weapons with which we fight the good fight for faith and with which we are to put sin to death in our lives. When we have had a bad day and feel discouraged or lacking in joy. When we struggle in our battle against a particular sin. If we or someone close to us is ill or homeward bound and in the later stages of life. Fight for faith knowing that God has called to Himself a heritage, and as believers, we are it. What a hope! What a joy! What a glorious truth, to put sin and its temptations to death by reminding our souls that we are God's heritage.

And Moses does not only appeal to God on the basis of Israel being His heritage, Moses also intercedes for Israel by appealing to God for the sake of His glory and His Name. Saying:

"27 Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which you brought us say, "Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness."

One author when considering these verses noted that even though God's people had the freedom to break their covenant with Him, God did not have the ability to be unfaithful to His covenant promises, and Moses appeals to exactly that.

In appealing to God's promises, Moses prays, especially in response to v.12 where God said to Moses "*your people whom you have brought from Egypt*", and Moses repeats what he has just prayed in v26 again in v29. "*For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.'*

Essentially Moses is saying: No God, they are not my people whom I brought out. They are your people. Your heritage and you brought them out by your great power and your outstretched arm.



Moses ascribes all glory to God, and thereby shows himself to be the mediator that God had provided because God then relents from His anger and continues to provide for the sake of His faithfulness to His covenant promises.

And church, we know that God relented from His anger because of His provision for Israel in Deut. 10:1-2...

"At that time the Lord said to me, 'Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.'

After all but disowning the Israelites, after being ready to destroy them and make a new nation out of Moses, and after Moses' intercession as God's provided mediator, God provides a second set of tablets. A renewal of His covenant with His people. Those shattered tablets which symbolized shattered relationship...restored. God hears Moses' intercession and renews His covenant with His people.

Church, can you think of another time when God provided His own mediator, and after that mediator had done what He was sent to do, God sent His Spirit in order to confirm a new covenant with His people?

Moses was a great leader and mediator but hear what the writer of Hebrews says about God's ultimate mediator for us in Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.3 For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

The Lord provided a mediator for Israel, a renewal of the covenant in His provision of the second set of tablets, He even relented of His anger against Aaron so that when he died at a later time God provided a replacement in the form of his son Eleazar so that the Priesthood would continue. We even see in v. 8&9 the provision of the Levites to serve as priests.

God has truly relented from His anger because of the intercession of His appointed mediator. And all of this only points us to Christ, because God has ultimately and finally emptied his hot anger and wrath on Christ so that we who are His will have this appointed mediator, Jesus, for eternity to come. God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ so that if you call on the name of the



Lord Jesus Christ, He will truly relent from His anger towards you just as He did for Israel in v10b *"The Lord was unwilling to destroy you."*

Brothers and sisters, is that not the most glorious truth and hope for this life and the one to come. We fall short of God's glory again and again and again, and God who would be justified to destroy us for us our sins (our rebellion and stubbornness), says, I will provide a mediator so that I do not need to destroy you, and so that I would be able to renew my covenant with you. And in doing so we have come full circle. We are right back with Moses and the Israelites in Chapter 9 v1.

"Hear, O Israel: you are to cross over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you..."

Do you remember that? Now hear it mirrored in 10v11:

"11 And the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them.'"

God once again says to Israel, I am with you, and I will give to you the land I swore to your fathers to give to them. God has renewed the covenant, and they can therefore have complete and rock solid faith in the fact that God will surely do all He has promised to their forefathers to do for them.

If this is not a call to worship, I do not know what is. There is no more appropriate response to God keeping His covenant with us, even when we rebel against him time after time after time. He is the covenant making and covenant keeping God. And worshipping Him in faith and obedience for all He has done for us is a right and good response.

Let's pray and do so now.