

## The Road Runs Through It?

Continuing from the first writing, “Prepare God’s Arrival”, this next in the series remains “on the road” – or uses the subject of roads to symbolize the way to the cross.

Turing the good book back a number of pages leads us to the Old Testament and, specifically, to the book of Deuteronomy. This book takes place in the conclusion of a long, 40 year journey that began with their emancipation from slavery in Egypt and is about begin again with the fulfillment of the resting plan across the Jordan River. Moses has led them the whole long way by God’s appointment; but in this last leg of the trip, he will pass the baton to Joshua.

### Deuteronomy 12

Until now you haven’t arrived at the goal, the resting place, the inheritance that God, your God, is giving you. But the minute you cross the Jordan River and settle into the land God, your God, is enabling you to inherit, he’ll give you rest from all your surrounding enemies. You’ll be able to settle down and live in safety.

- *The Message*

If you can imagine camping-out for 40 years and, even more profound, traveling as nomads for much of time; and even more phenomenal, engaging in battle; then maybe you can grasp some measure of what the Hebrews had endured to reach this point...the place...this resting place.

Granted, with all the challenges, the people have failed repeatedly in their faith and obedience to God through Moses. Even while Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments, they were busy building idols to false Gods and, otherwise, reveling in false religions. Grumbling, complaints and faithlessness marked the prolonged journey that could have been simplified greatly by their trust and allegiance to God. As it was however, they caused their delay and the eventual passing of a generation that would not witness the fulfillment of God’s promise. The road to the cross was rough and rigorous – but made so the willfulness of man to attempt his own way rather than to trust in God’s.

One of my favorite passages from this book has to do with family, with children and their parents. From chapter 11:

Place these words on your hearts. Get them deep inside you. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder. Teach them to your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning until you fall into bed at night. Inscribe them on the doorposts and gates of your cities so that you'll live a long time, and your children with you, on the soil that God promised to give your ancestors for as long as there is a sky over the Earth.

Here, Moses encourages the parents to pass-on the “words” of God by talking about them, by posting them and by living them in every area of their lives – such that this promise may be passed-on to future generations. You see, it is not enough “to talk” about these words, but you must also live them – or do “the walk”. Faith is fulfilled by putting words to action – or “the talk” to “the walk”.

As Moses gave his last instructions, he did so with the sense and understanding that he had been pleased God; but he also realized that they too would have please God in their own walk – they and their families. Thus he spoke to them as though a father might speak to his own children; with love and compassion, but also with authority and conviction. He did want them fail anymore, but wanted the promise for them, for generations to come.

In some sense, we each follow a figurative road or journey in our lifetime; though we may not make decisions at first, our aging typically brings more independent and individual choices on matters pertaining to what we believe, who we marry, how will live and what we live for. Sometimes we make mistakes – whether considered large or small – but sometimes we choose wisely and the blessing comes not only to us – but to those who depend on us and who are connected to us in some way. Like the illustration above, life can be somewhat of balancing act between our own will and wisdom, and that which God has



@BCL@94044D5E

marked-out for us. Unlike the trapeze artist who must straddle the line, we must ideally choose God rather than self as a god. You see, the Hebrews sometimes choose themselves or their gods over God – which was the wrong choice that led to the wrong direction, confusion and God's discipline or correction. It would have been easier or simpler if they would have chosen right to begin with – and stayed the course – but they repeatedly chose poorly and did not seem to learn easily from their own mistakes. In the closing passages of this book or chapter 30, he says the following:

And I command you today: Love God, your God. Walk in his ways. Keep his commandments, regulations, and rules so that you will live, really live, live exuberantly, blessed by God, your God, in the land you are about to enter and possess.

But I warn you: If you have a change of heart, refuse to listen obediently, and willfully go off to serve and worship other gods, you will most certainly die. You won't last long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you today: I place before you Life and Death, Blessing and Curse. Choose life so that you and your children will live. And love God, your God, listening obediently to him, firmly embracing him.

Oh yes, he is life itself, a long life settled on the soil that God, your God, promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So what it really comes down to is choosing life; for there is a road that leads to life and, we are told, few may find it; and then there is a road that leads elsewhere – to places we do not want...and should not want to go. Though a man may have many plans (or choices) in his life, it is the Lord's purpose (or journey) that prevails...and the road runs through it.