

FEAR – THE ARCH NEMESIS OF BELIEF

Devarim – Fear: The Arch Nemesis of Belief

The book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) is referred to by the Sages as "Mishneh Torah," which is commonly interpreted as the "review/repetition of the Torah." The entire book was written in the last five weeks of Moses' life. Of all the books of the Torah, this one is the most beloved. It contains over 200 laws of the Torah, 70 of them being completely new. It is also the last book of the Torah which, for many, commemorates the final lap in the race for the most exciting biblical holiday of the year: Sukkot! But out of all the accolades that can be given to the book of Devarim, none other can be given to it more than it is a powerful bookend review.



The Creator is like a Father so He thinks as a great fatherly teacher would think. The best way to make sure your children remember what you're trying to teach them is to review all the things you told them before you send them off to school, or, in this case, war. And that is exactly what this week's portion is all about. It is a 30,000-foot view of the last 40 years in the wilderness. From Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land, Moses goes through the details to remind them of all that Yahweh has done and to remind them why they were forced to stay there to begin with.

Reviewing our spiritual journeys allows us to "track" what God is doing in our lives. Along the journey of life, there are waypoints where the Spirit does things to try to get our attention. Sometimes His hints are very subtle until you put them up against a trackable history. I personally keep a journal and it is sometimes startling how the Father will illuminate something He wants me to see that I would never have seen unless I was able to go back and make the

connection from my journal. In the same way, this portion is Moses' "journal." Can you imagine where we would be without it? Thank God Moses took the time to write everything down that he did. (Although I sometimes wish he would have been into scrapbooking, as well.) Pictures are worth more than a thousand words. With that said, let's take a review with Moses and see where it goes.

LEADERSHIP

The very first subject that is brought up is the fact that Moses simply could not take care of almost two million people all by himself. He needed help.

Read Deuteronomy 1: 9-18

This is the beginning of what is popularly known as the "Moses Model" of leadership. It's a fairly simple model, really. Yahweh is at the top and is the main leader. Then there is the person he ordains to be His main connection point for vision and direction. Then there are leaders of different-sized groups who are given authority based on their wisdom and knowledge. Their job is to organize and help lead the people of that organization in the direction the Father is leading through the one that is given the seat of Moses. This is a theocratic government (one where Yahweh is the final authority). All congregations are to work in this manner. The larger the organization the more leaders will be needed to serve the people. It is not a hierarchy. It is a **TEAM** that has specific roles of operation for each leader. The most difficult position is the seat of Moses. The only people that ever want to be in that seat are those that have never been in that seat. It is the seat that draws the most criticism, the most judgment, the most stress, and oftentimes the most regret as there are so many decisions that have to be made and it is simply not possible for a human to make every one correctly. And this is where Moses found himself in the first part of this chapter, overwhelmed and exhausted from trying to hold it all together.

There are believers that do not like any kind of leadership or authority structure and struggle with the Moses model. Ironically, that only proves we are all Israelites at heart because they didn't like it so much, either (at times). We are all rebellious at heart and just want to do what we want to do. We don't like having to submit to authority in any way. This is partly because we have all seen such bad examples and abuses of that authority and partly because we just want to do whatever we want without recourse. This kind of thinking is a fairly modern concept and is certainly not biblical. If we all lived back in the time of Yeshua or Moses, we could say all we want that we don't want to be a part of any group that would require us to submit to the leadership, but if we wanted to be a part of Israel or any local congregation, we would have no choice.

The model Yahweh gave Moses through his father-in-law was brilliant. Not only did it spread the workload out, it created an entire system of servicing and ministering to the people, curbing crime through real consequences, and allowed Yahweh to lead the people efficiently through the one to whom He gave the vision. Anyone that has been a part of any organization where everyone has equal authority learns that such a structure quickly leads to chaos and division. Lowering stress and keeping Moses from being overwhelmed was the main purpose of the system, to begin with.

Have you ever felt overwhelmed? Like you were doing your best to hold whatever you were leading together? Maybe it's your family you're leading, a bible study, an organization, or maybe you're just trying to lead yourself. No matter the situation, Yahweh gives us instructions here on how to manage. Delegation is His method of choice. Whether it's a household or a business, authority, respect, and delegation are key. The leader sits in the seat of Moses. Everyone appointed to assist in the overall goal or agenda is endowed with a certain amount of authority to accomplish that mission. It can be a five-year-old that is given authority over something to start teaching them the responsibility to each member of the household being given certain responsibilities to heads of departments at companies to managers over entire franchises. *It doesn't really matter.* The key to relieving stress is delegation. When everyone chips in, the situation is manageable. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

How organized is your life? Are you taking on too much? Perhaps it is not the workload that is overwhelming you but how you're organizing it that needs a little help. Although we all go through times where we are just flat out crazy busy and there is not much we can do about it, more often than not we could learn a lesson or two from the Moses model on delegation.

NEVER DOUBT THE WORD OF GOD

Out of all the things that happen in the forty years in the Desert, Moses spends more time on the story of the twelve spies than any other, and rightfully so. It is this story that caused them to spend forty years in the wilderness! Think about that for a moment. ONE SINGLE MOMENT of fear cost them their lives, destiny, and inheritance! This is how critical every decision we make is. We simply may not realize the impact of that decision on our future and the future of everyone around us.

Read Deuteronomy 1:19-46

QUESTION: If you could summarize this entire section into one phrase or sentence, what would it be?

For me, it would be this: *"Fear God and keep His commandments"* and *"Giants are only grasshoppers in disguise."*

Fear is quite possibly the strongest emotion a human can have. It is unfortunately what motivates many of us to do things we would not otherwise do. It is the #1 tactic the enemy uses to move people to do what he wants them to do. There can be no doubt that our heavenly Father hates His people being in fear when He goes so far out of His way to take care of us if we only obey Him.

In Hebrew, the word for **"fear"** is *"yare"* (pronounced "yah-rey"). It carries with it the idea of being frightened but can also mean "reverence, honor, or awe." We can be yare of living in a bad part of town and we can be yare of someone we admire that has been given much authority and we willfully submit to that authority because of that yare.

Yare carries with it a strong level of respect. In this case, the ten spies respected the giants more than the power of Yahweh. Yare either causes an individual to draw closer to the will of God or further away from it. Unholy fear is not from the Father and He looks down on it heavily.

Read Deuteronomy 31:6, 8

Why are we told to "fear not"? Because He is with us. It's just that simple. When a believer is living a life in obedience to the word, there is no power on earth that can touch him without His permission.

Read Romans 8: 31-39

We are that close to Him. There is no way to separate us from His great love and protective power.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

I think you're getting the point. Fear destroys the will of God in your life. When we make decisions out of fear, we are choosing the route of the desert. Fear says you have to move fast and forces you to make decisions before you have time to really think or pray through the entire matter and all the details. That is how fear works. It acts first based on news and forces us into doing things we would never do without it.

There is a difference between wisdom and fear and sometimes those lines get blurred. Godly wisdom comes from above and is never based on fear. Many times man's wisdom is based on fear. When it's Yahweh, there will always be a supernatural confirmation through signs following. When it's really Him, He leaves no doubt and operates in the midst of shalom. A decision based on fear will bring anxiety and further stress.

QUESTION: What is the opposite of fear?

To believe. The Hebrew word is "aman" (pronounced "aw-man"). It means "to build up, support, to be faithful, to the parent or to nurse, to stand firm, trust, to establish or to endure." It is spelled Aleph, Mem, Nun, exactly like the Hebrew word "Aw-mane" from which we get our English word "Amen," or "So be it." To believe is to establish something so firm in the physical realm that nothing can move it. Let's look at an example of this word in action.

Read Isaiah 22:22-23

In verse 23 you notice that "the peg that is fastened in the secure (aman) place will be removed and be cut down..." In Hebrew, it is not saying the peg itself will be removed, but rather the part that is above ground will be cut off. The peg itself is firmly established in the ground. Only what is above the ground is vulnerable and susceptible to being cut down. In the same way, we are to be so firmly established in Him that there is simply nothing that can move us. We are firmly planted and no storm can remove what is rooted deeply in Him.

On the other hand, when we are not fully rooted in Him, when we do not fully believe His promises or doubt His word, it is like taking a tent peg and slowly pulling it out of the ground. When even the smallest storm comes, it will rip the entire peg out of the ground and collapse the tent, ruining everything inside. Yahweh desires us to trust in Him so securely that our stakes are so firmly pushed into the ground that even the tops are barely visible.

QUESTION: Outside of fear, what do you think is another top characteristic that the enemy uses to motivate people? When people don't think very highly of themselves, what do we call that? What is the opposite of "aman" in the previous verse?

INSECURITY! Insecurity is powerful. If you are in a group setting, discuss for a moment how insecurity is related to the word "aman" and belief.

When someone is insecure about something, whether it be their talent, their looks, their intellect, or something else, they are stating what they aman: what they believe, what they are secure in. Instead of being secure in the way Yahweh made us, a person that is insecure about one of their features is telling Yahweh that they don't believe He made them perfectly. They are securing their "peg" in the sand of what other people think rather than the concrete of His word.

Insecurity breeds suspicion. Think about the story that is being reviewed here about the spies that came back from Canaan. Because their peg (belief) was not firmly rooted in what Yahweh thought about them and what He thought they could do, they became suspicious of His word being true and began to slowly remove their peg from His soil and hold it in their hand until they could figure out what they wanted to do. This suspicion was not rooted in the strong relationship that Yahweh was offering. It was rooted in fear and disbelief.

For example: When a wife fully believes that her husband thinks she is beautiful and that there is no one else besides her that he wants to be with, there is simply no way she can feel a sense of constant insecurity when she is not with him. Her peg of belief is firmly rooted in his proven love for her. She doesn't have to ask if he was faithful, because she knows his love for her has been proven so many times over that her peg is firmly rooted in his aman for her. We do what we believe. So if we have insecurity in an area, we need to find out what the belief is that is causing that peg to be not fully secured to the ground. Anytime there is insecurity, there is a lie somewhere that the enemy either planted himself or used the actions of another person to plant. Ultimately, we need to go to the Father and give him that insecurity, that lie that is in our hearts. We need to surrender it fully and let Him heal our hearts. It is critical that we know who we are in **HIM** and put our trust in **HIM**. When we confess the lie out loud and give whatever is making us insecure in an area to the Father, giving Him our mind, will, and emotions, we are pushing our peg deeply into the ground of His love. Then, each time we feel that insecurity creep up, we must immediately rebuke the enemy and confess the truth to chase that spirit of fear away! ***We do and become what we believe so believe His word and believe the best!***

QUESTION: Can you think of any other examples of how belief (or lack of belief) actually affects our daily lives? Does anyone have any personal examples where insecurity has really affected you or can you think of some things in your life right now that you need to surrender so you can replant your peg?

Don't take this lightly. We all have areas that we need to really audit and re-stake our ground on. Fear and insecurity costs the children of Israel their full inheritance and 40 years of their lives. Fear and insecurity has cost many a person, many a marriage, and many a leader to live lives that are filled with constant anxiety and unnecessary pain. This is an area I really encourage you to be real and raw in. And there is no time like the present to deal with it. Confess it now, whether to your small group, to a friend, or to your spouse. In doing so you are ultimately confessing before Yahweh and that alone exposes the enemy and pushes that peg much further into the ground.

As we close out this section, I would like to point out something that the children of Israel missed that we should not.

Read Deuteronomy 1: 20-21 again.

Did you see that? "*Go up and possess it!*" and "**DO NOT FEAR OR BE DISCOURAGED!**" He didn't even say go up and fight. He just said go possess it...and on your way, I will fight for you. The children of Israel did not listen to this simple command. Instead, they tricked Moses into spying out the land first. There was no need to spy it out. They just needed to go possess it. That decision costs them everything. So now, turn to Deuteronomy 3:22.

Read Deuteronomy 3: 1-11

Yahweh always does what He says He is going to do. Look at this. They "utterly destroyed" their enemies. And they not only destroyed them, they also destroyed one of the largest giants of that era. A giant that was over 12 feet tall. Almost forty years later, after the twelve spies incident, the Father shows them His powerful promises always come true as they annihilate the giants and their enemies. This is what belief does. This is what having no fear of man does. It crushes the enemy and makes way for your future.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the three chapters of the review of the forty years in the Wilderness all come down to these two words: Yare and Aman. Fear and Belief. Do you live your life in fear or do you live in perfect belief? Don't let the enemy steal your joy by making decisions based on fear and anxiety. Shalom only comes from walking in the belief of His promises. Yahweh has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and a sound mind. Live in His power. Live in love. Fear not, for He is with you, says the Lord of Hosts. Fear or Belief. What's in your wallet?

Shalom,
Jim Staley