

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*The Importance of Applying Wisdom – Part I.*"

We're going to begin by looking at some verses in **Deuteronomy 17** if you'd like to turn there.

We've been in a series on wisdom, and in the last two sermons we looked at Solomon. I want you to see how important it is not just to receive wisdom, but to apply it, and Solomon is the best example in Scripture. These verses will help us see that Solomon didn't apply the wisdom he received.

Also, these verses have some application to the presidential election season. The first presidential debate – and I use the word debate loosely – took place this past week. Personally, I didn't think it was easy to watch.

These verses reveal what God wanted for the king of His people. We don't have a king, but I think these verses help inform what we should look for in a national leader.

Back in 2008 when I was serving at Grace Baptist, Barack Obama was running for president. He received an A+ rating from Planned Parenthood. During a speech he was very vocal about his support of murdering babies. I was really fired up and I told Pastor Joe that we needed to show the church a clip of his speech.

Pastor Joe responded by having me listen to a sermon by Martin Lloyd Jones. This was one of those messages that I will never forget, and it greatly impacted my preaching.

If I had to summarize the point of the sermon, it was this...

As pastors we have two choices with our congregations:

- We can tell them how to vote. This is what I was advocating to Pastor Joe. The weakness of this approach is it doesn't deal with people's hearts. People are simply doing what they're told, versus – in the language of Rom 14:5 – being convinced in their own mind.
- The other approach, which Martin Lloyd Jones advocated for, was to preach the gospel, preach Christ, preach the Word so people's hearts are changed. Then they will vote, not b/c of what their pastor told them, but b/c of how God directed them.

I never forgot this sermon and it's helped me stay the course over the years when people came to me with political agendas they wanted me to preach from the pulpit.

Here are a few examples of how this can work practically...

- If a pastor preaches what the Word says about theft and the importance of self-responsibility his congregation won't vote for socialists
- If a pastor preaches what the Word says about the value of life and that every human being is made in the image of God, his congregation won't vote for candidates who murder babies
- If a pastor preaches what the Word says about marriage, then his congregation won't vote for candidates who support homosexuality

- If a pastor preaches what the Word says about debt, then his congregation will vote for candidates with the least government spending

Look w/ me at **verse 14**...

Deuteronomy 17:14 “When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’

God knew that in the future the people would ask for a king so they could be **like the nations around [them]**...instead of being the holy and separate nation God wanted them to be.

Deuteronomy 17:15 you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. **One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.**

The king couldn't be a foreigner, which is to say he had to be an Israelite. When God wanted to punish Israel he put them under a foreign king by having another nation oppress them...but they couldn't have a foreigner as their king.

God chose Saul as their first king, but it was never His plan for Saul to establish a lasting dynasty, because he was from the tribe of Benjamin and the Messiah would be from the tribe of Judah.

So why did God choose Saul?

There are two reasons...

First, he was the king the people wanted. They wanted someone who was physically impressive so he could lead them into battle like the kings of other nations. Saul was head and shoulders taller than everyone else in Israel.

The second reason God chose Saul was to judge the people for rejecting Him. One of the strongest ways God punishes people is by giving them what they want.

Later God rejected Saul and graciously choose David to take his place.

God had restrictions for the king, which are outlined in **verses 16 and 17**. Let me tell you what to look for...

Kings had so much power they could typically get whatever they wanted. This would allow kings to put their trust in earthly resources instead of in God Himself.

So four times in these verses the king is told **not to acquire** things for himself.

And this brings us to lesson 1...

LESSON 1: GOD WANTS LEADERS TRUSTING HIM.

Look at verse 16...

Deuteronomy 17:16 Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’

Horses were like OT tanks. To forbid the king from multiplying horses was to forbid him from trusting the strength of his army. He was supposed to trust God instead.

Consider these two verses:

- **Psa 20:7** Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.
- **Psa 33:16a** The king is not saved by his great army

We’ll talk a little later about why they weren’t to return to Egypt. For now look at **verse 17**...

Deuteronomy 17:17a And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away,

Obviously kings could obtain many wives for themselves b/c of lust, but often in the Old Testament kings obtained wives for political reasons. Alliances between nations were ratified by the marriage of the son of one king to the daughter of another. The idea is you’re not going to attack the nation that your son or daughter is part of.

God forbid kings from doing this for two reasons...

First, if a king multiplied wives for political reasons, where would he get these women? From foreign, or pagan, nations, which is why God warned that they could turn the king’s heart away to their false gods. It’s an issue of being unequally yoked.

God wanted His people staying holy – or separate – from the surrounding nations...not making alliances with them.

Second, kings engaged in these alliances to strengthen their nations, but God wanted kings trusting Him.

The nation should be strong, not b/c of the political, but b/c of the spiritual...

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Look at the rest of **verse 17**...

Deuteronomy 17:17b nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

Like horses, wealth was something else a king could trust instead of trusting in God. If a king didn't have a powerful army, but he had money, he could hire mercenaries or another nation to fight for him...which some Israelite kings did.

Pro 11:28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

Now do something for me...

Briefly look back at **verse 16**. It says the king must **not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'**

Notice this isn't about the king not returning to Egypt. It's about the king not directing the people back to Egypt. The language is strong:

Why such strong language saying, **"You shall never return that way again"?**

Let's think of the context...

We are in the book of Deuteronomy. Israel is on the border of the Promised Land after wandering for 40 years, because when they reached the Promised Land 40 years earlier they didn't trust God. They let ten spies spread unbelief, and then the people rebelled.

Moses can't go with them into the Promised Land. The book of Deuteronomy contains his three farewell messages to the nation he loved and lead.

If you understand all this you understand why God didn't want them looking back to Egypt. This is what got them in trouble 40 years earlier.

But there's also a lot of typology in this for us!

- There's typology in Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
- There's typology in their journey through the wilderness.
- There's typology in them entering into the Promised Land.

You're familiar w/ some of the typology already:

- You know the Passover is a type of Christ: **1 Cor 5:7 says Christ [is] our Passover lamb**
- The Promised Land is a type of the rest believers have in Christ. This is explained in **Heb 4**.

Let me flesh this out a little more so we can understand what was so wrong with Solomon's actions. I'll do a quick lesson w/ multiple parts to make it clear...

LESSON 2: THE TYPOLOGY (PART I) EGYPT IS A TYPE OF THE WORLD.

Joseph invited his brothers and their families into Egypt; seventy people total. They multiplied so much Pharaoh became terrified of them.

Exodus 12:37 says Moses delivered six hundred thousand men from Egypt, which means there were probably around two-to-three million people total. Egypt served as a womb for Israel to grow from seventy people to millions of people.

Israel was born in Egypt like we're born in the world.

LESSON 2: THE TYPOLOGY (PART II) MOSES IS A TYPE OF THE LAW.

The Law was given to Moses, which is why it's called "The Law of Moses" and "The Mosaic Law."

Moses delivered Israel from Egypt like the Law delivers us from the world: **Romans 3:20 By the law is the knowledge of sin.**

The Law convicts us, we repent and turn from the world to Jesus.

LESSON 2: THE TYPOLOGY (PART III) JOSHUA IS A TYPE OF JESUS.

Joshua and Jesus have the same name, but Jesus is Greek, and Joshua is Hebrew. They both mean, "*Jehovah is salvation*":

- Joshua led God's people in the Old Testament into the Promised Land.
- Jesus leads God's people in the New Testament into the true and greater Promised Land.

LESSON 2: THE TYPOLOGY (PART IV) ISRAEL'S JOURNEY IS A TYPE OF OUR JOURNEY.

- Israel was born in Egypt like we're born in the world.
- Israel was delivered from Egypt at Passover, like we're delivered from the world by Christ, the true and greater Passover Lamb.
- If you're familiar w/ the books of Exodus and Numbers, you know Israel struggled with wanting to return to Egypt, like we struggle with wanting to return to the world.
- Israel kept turning to Egypt for help instead of turning to God. Here are two examples:
 - **2 Kings 18:21** and **Isaiah 36:6** **Behold, you are trusting now in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.**
 - **Ezekiel 17:15** **[Zedekiah] rebelled against [God] by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and a large army.**
 - Similarly, we're tempted to turn to the world for help instead of turning to God...whether it's psychology, worldly philosophies, secular approaches to solving problems.

Now I gave you a little bigger picture of the typology so you can see why – throughout the Old Testament – it was so bad for God’s people to look to Egypt. It was looking back to what God had delivered them from.

We do the same thing when we look to the world, or return to whatever God has delivered us from...

2 Pet 2:20 After [people] have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 It would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

This is what people did in the OT when they returned to Egypt and what we do when we return to the world.

With this in mind turn to **1 Kings 3**...

1 Kings 3:1 Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt. He took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David until he had finished building his own house and the house of the Lord and the wall around Jerusalem.

Solomon is doing the things we saw God telling kings not to do in **Deuteronomy 17**:

1. First, he’s returning to Egypt
2. Second, more than likely this wasn’t his first wife, which means he’s starting to multiply them. The reason I don’t think this was his first wife, is he married her for political reasons – the alliance with Egypt – versus – companionship.

For a moment I want you to think about what Solomon did: he became the son-in-law of Pharaoh...the son-in-law of the nation that oppressed his people for over four centuries.

It just feels wrong, doesn’t it?

So Solomon is compromising, but you look at this and say, *“Okay, but this was before God gave him wisdom. Of course he wouldn’t do any of this later!”*

As we know from our previous sermon, he receives wisdom in **verses 5-13**.

We looked at these verses but there’s one verse after he received wisdom that we didn’t look at that I want to show you now. Look at **verse 14**...

1 Kings 3:14 And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

This verse is so important. It teaches us a crucial lesson...

Why did God say this to Solomon? If God gave him wisdom, wasn't that enough to set him up for success?

No. God told him he also had to obey.

God gave Solomon wisdom, but then he had to apply it...and that's what God told him in this verse! It's not enough simply to have wisdom...and this brings us to Lesson 3...

LESSON 3: WISDOM MUST BE APPLIED

It's important to understand that wisdom only allows us to know what to do. We still have to do it, right?

If we don't apply the wisdom God gives us, then we're being foolish.

Ironically, Solomon is one of the premier examples in Scripture of both wisdom and foolishness. You wouldn't expect that would you?

Turn to **1 Kings 10**...

1 Kings 10:26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

He multiplied horses...like God told kings not to do.

1 Kings 10:27 And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah.

He multiplied wealth...like God told kings not to do .

1 Kings 10:28 And Solomon's import of horses was FROM EGYPT and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price. 29 A chariot could be imported FROM EGYPT for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

He returned to Egypt and sent his people there...like God told kings not to do!

Why wouldn't he when Pharaoh is his father-in-law?

Egypt mentioned, horses, and chariots are mentioned. What do you think of when you see these three together?

I think of the Israelites fleeing through the Red Sea with the Egyptians in hot pursuit.

It just doesn't seem wise for Solomon to be doing this, does it?

But you think this is bad, wait until we look at the next chapter!

We can't go any further this morning. There's too much in chapter 11. But let me say this...

God gives us wisdom, and we must apply it. If we don't, we're being foolish.

We must not be simply hearers of the Word, but doers also.

Let me conclude by showing you some verses in **Gal 3**. Go ahead and turn there.

Take your mind back to the typology I mentioned earlier.

Back in lesson two, part four says that Israel's journey is a type of our journey.

After Israel was delivered from Egypt two groups developed, which begs the question: Which group are you in?

1. One group remained under Moses, or the law, and died in the wilderness. They never entered the Promised Land and experienced rest.
2. The other group made it out of the wilderness under Joshua, or under Jesus, and entered the promised land. They experienced rest.

Here's the application for us:

- Just as Moses could only take Israel so far, the Law can only take us so far.
- Just as Israel couldn't enter under Moses, we can't enter under the Law. Why?
 - There's no rest under the Law. There's only work and frustration.
 - Israel had to be under Joshua like we must be under Jesus to experience rest.

You see this illustrated in **Galatians 3:23–25**:

- As Israel was under Moses we were under the law: **Galatians 3:23 Now before faith came, - which means before we could put faith in Christ – we were held captive under the law** (or kept under Moses), **imprisoned until the coming faith** (or Joshua or Jesus) **would be revealed.**
- As Israel was then under Joshua, we are then under Christ: **Galatians 3:24 So then, the law** (or Moses) **was our guardian until Christ** (or Joshua) **came, in order that we might be justified by faith.**
- As Israel was no longer under Moses when they were under Joshua, we are no longer under the law when we are under Jesus: **Galatians 3:25 But now that faith** (or Joshua or Jesus) **has come, we are no longer under a guardian** (or Moses or the law)

Listen to this interesting verse...

Hebrews 4:8 If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.

Joshua led them into the Promised Land. Why does it say this?

Because Joshua didn't give them the true and greater rest.

Jesus is better than Joshua because He leads people into the better rest:

- Not a physical rest found in the Promised Land
- But a spiritual rest Jesus described when Jesus said...

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

If Israel was expected to follow Joshua, how much more are we expected to follow Jesus?

We've been talking about wisdom and I'll say this...

- Wise people find themselves under Jesus.
- Foolish people remain under the law.

If we don't follow Jesus, we're still under Moses. We're wandering like Israel. Their wilderness was physical and ours is spiritual, but we can perish in ours as much as they perished in theirs.

Let's pray.