

Date: 4th February 2018

Series name: Master Plan

Sermon # in series: 7

Sermon Title: God is Faithful

Bible Reference: Deuteronomy – 1 Kings

**A disclaimer from Pastor Stuart**

*My role in the church here is to feed and care for God’s people the best I can. Key to that, in my opinion is teaching and preaching from the Bible; but that is not all a pastor has to do! In fact after the emails, staff admin, hospital visits, community visits, leadership meetings, etc, etc, there sometimes seems to be little time for sermon prep! Years ago I used to agonise over trying to come up with two, often three, totally original sermons each week. But I’ve found that, for me at least, that is impossibility. I’ve learned to be grateful for and to use the gifts God gives to help me – not only the Holy Spirit, but other Bible teachers and preachers.*

*Over the years I’ve discovered that if something teaches, inspires and excites me it’s likely to do the same for those I speak to. So I admit that sometimes I find myself depending heavily on other people’s ideas, at least to ‘prime the pump’ and therefore I claim originality for very little in these sermons. If you look hard enough and wide enough you’ll probably find who I’ve been reading and learning from! I never knowingly plagiarise, but if you find I have, then I apologise. It must have been that what was said was just too good not to use!*

*I am particularly indebted to the likes of John Piper, Sam Storms, Wayne Grudem, John Ortberg & Rick Warren. The Lord regularly uses them to get my spiritual pulse racing. I’m also indebted to many who kindly make their sermons available on the likes of sermoncentral.com and preachingtoday.com. Others who help me include ‘The Doctor’ (Martyn Lloyd-Jones), C.H Spurgeon and any of the Puritans.*

*These sermons are not made available because I think they’re good but in the hope and with the prayer that they may be used by the Holy Spirit to bless others as they have blessed our own church here in Ipswich, UK.*

*Unless otherwise specified, all scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Hodder and Stoughton Limited.*

[Creative Commons License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/uk/)

This material is copyright ©2011 Whitton Baptist Church and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 UK: England & Wales License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/uk/)

Master Plan #6

A Faithful God (Deuteronomy – Kings)

God and the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, the descendant of Abraham – are now in a covenant agreement. Agreed at Sinai they agree to him being the one and only, supreme king, the promise to obey him and trust him. For his part he says that he will never, ever break his side of the deal, and if they keep theirs he will protect and provide for them. They will have everything they need.

He gives the 10 commands as the nations rule book, and then the sacrificial system to take care of things when they broke the rules. Sin mattered right from the start!

God’s plan was for them to leave Egypt and go straight into and inhabit the land of Canaan – show on map.

But when spies came back with reports of fortified cities and giant people they forgot what God had promised, they doubted it would happen. They refused to go in.

Result was a near 40 yr delay, whilst the adult generation died off. Even in this period God kept his word and provided food (manna every day) and water, and the small but miraculous fact that their shoes didn’t wear out in all that time!

At the end of this 40 yrs the people gather again at the edge of the ‘Promised Land’ the land God said he’d give them. Most of them were too young to remember the events of Sinai in any meaningful way, **thus as they gather once more at the edge of the Promised land the covenant and the laws that were to govern the nation are restated** – so no one is under any illusions of what and who they were and how they were to live. This was not a free for all, they were God’s people, under his rule.

This is what the book of Deuteronomy is all about – the 2nd reading of the law. *One thing you’ll read in Deut is the consequences God stated for them forgetting him and rejecting his rule - they would lose the land,* *they would be scattered once more, Deut 28 is a whole, long chapter of such warnings. Keep that in mind!*

Moses dies and his long time assistant **Joshua** leads them into the promised land. The book that bears his name is the story, with it’s up and down’s – though mostly ups, of the incredible, against all odds, conquest of the land. God totally kept his word for them – everywhere they went he went ahead and gave them victory.

So they settle in the land and for several years, as long as Joshua was alive, all is well. However, when their godly, much loved leader died things rapidly declined. Becoming settled, prosperous and complacent they did what they promised they would never do, and exactly what God had warned them not to do – **they forgot the Lord! This part of the story is what Judges is all about**

Consequence? God allowed enemies to come in and terrorise the land so they’d think and realise what they’ done. Only when things got really bad would the Israelites realise what they had done and cry out to God for help.

Over and over again this happened and over and over again God would answer their prayer for deliverance and **raise up a champion** (often an unlikely one) to lead his people to victory and freedom from the enemies again. These people are Gideon the scared warrior, Samson the strongman, Deborah the unlikely woman leader, etc. God was faithful to an undeserving people.

Sadly after each time God rescued them they would go back to old habits; spiritually things became very dark in the nation and though the outward ceremonies were in place and the sacrifices were still made their heart really wasn’t in it.

It was at this bleak time that **Samuel** comes on the scene. He was a colossus of a figure. Called as a young boy to serve God he truly feared and respected God. He was good for the nation.

But this didn’t stop the people deciding that they’d had a enough of simply having ‘God’ as their king, with priests to lead them. Maybe not surprising because even the priests had become corrupt and were ripping the people off. The cry went up *‘We want a King, we want to be like the nations around, we want a man to lead us.’*

Not a rejection of God per see, and yet it was. Terribly sad compromise – wanting to be like others! Remember – God call was for them to be different, for others to want to be like them, not them wanting to be like the nations around.

* Still a subtle temptation for us!

God lets them have their king - **Saul** was chosen - tall strapping humble man, every inch a leader, just what the people wanted. But it was a disaster as the power went to his head and he ended up rejecting God, and the country foundered even more.

But God was in control, and faithful – and he removed Saul and put **David** as king in his place. Totally different. *This is David of David and Goliath fame* – David who respected God, and wouldn’t stand for Goliath badmouthing God and his people. He couldn’t sit quietly and just let that happen.

He was a good and godly king, the nation flourished under his leadership – strange how that happened under a king that honoured and worshipped God!

However, he was not perfect and in lustful sin he took another man’s wife and then conspired to have the woman’s husband killed in battle. He was found out, repented to God, was deeply sorry, but things weren’t quite the same again and divisions in the nation began to surface.

When David died his son **Solomon** succeeded him. In many respects Solomon exceeded even David’s in success as a king. The nations position as a world leader was strengthened even further and it really looked like all God’s promises for the nation had come true – dignitaries and leaders came from all over the then known world to have an audience with Solomon and seek his wisdom and advice.

Such success always creates envy and jealousy and there were some who plotted against him. These men were sent into exile but were to come back to cause mayhem later (more next week!)

Sadly, Solomon’s international fame led him to seek alliances with many nations, and these were usually sealed with a marriage. Solomon ended up with 700 wives and 300 mistresses from various countries, cultures and religions. These turned his head away from God, and this once dedicated follower of God ended up building temples and worshipping other Gods.

Evidence is that before he died he realised the stupidity of his way – but the damage was done. God’s name had been dishonoured and consequences would follow. God declared that as a result of his action the nation, the great nation would divide. This had huge consequences for the country. But that’s for next time.

**What do we learn from this?**

1. Easy to become like others when we’re called to be different
2. Sin has consequences. Sin divides. It never brings anything good. We cannot sin and ignore God and expect things to continue the same.
3. God is faithful! He kept his side of the covenant despite repeated and almost continuous forgetfulness and downright rejection by his people. He would not break his promise – he was fixed on his master plan and nothing can change that.

In one of my LG this week we pondered the question ‘*Can a Christian lose their salvation?*’. Explain the answer with idea of the new nature!

Time to inspect ourselves – communion.

I’m on my knees

Man of sorrows - Hillsong