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DEUTERONOMY 4:9

"But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children"

2

DEUTERONOMY IN THE PENTATEUCH

- Genesis (Creation + The Descendants of Abraham and Sarah)
- Exodus 1-18: Slavery, Deliverance, and Wilderness Wanderings
- Exodus 19-Numbers 10:10: Israel Arrives at Sinai and Receives the Torah
- Numbers 10-Numbers 36: The Exodus generation dies in the wilderness, and a new generation is born in their place.
- Deuteronomy 1-34: Moses addresses the wilderness generation, after its journey brings it to the eastern edge of the Holy Land

3

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4

FORGETFULNESS ENDANGERS THE WORLD

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WHAT IS ISRAEL CALLED TO REMEMBER IN DEUTERONOMY? EXAMPLES

- **"Remember** that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (5:13).
- "Just **remember** what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. The Lord your God will do the same to all the peoples of whom you are afraid" (7:18-19)
- **"Remember** the long way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments" (8:2)
- **"Remember**, do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; you have been rebellious against the Lord from the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place" (9:7)

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WHAT IS ISRAEL CALLED TO REMEMBER IN DEUTERONOMY? EXAMPLES

- "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. **Remember** that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this." (24:21)
- "You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. **Remember** that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings" (24:17-19)

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WHAT HAPPENS IF WE NEGLECT OUR MEMORIES, HISTORIES, AND INHERITED IDENTITIES?

8

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECTING THE PAST

- When we forget how precarity and vulnerability feel, we may be less likely to extend help to those in similar circumstances. *Memory of hardship nourishes our empathy.*
- When we forget our history of shortcomings, we may walk into the future without recognizing our profound capacity to damage it. *Remembering our failures gives us humility.*
- When we forget how difficult circumstances were overcome in the past, we might fail to recognize hope for overcoming them in the future. *Remembering challenges that have been overcome fuels hope in adversity.*
- When we forget the sweetness of liberation, we might fail to fight for others' freedom. *Memory enlarges our generosity.*
- When we forget our past, we may forget why engage in important practices (cf. Deut 5:13, which names freedom from slavery as the reason for Sabbath practice). *Memory energizes purpose.*

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IT'S NOT ENOUGH JUST TO REMEMBER. WE HAVE TO PASS ON THAT MEMORY.

"But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; *make them known to your children and your children's children*" (Deut 4:9)

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WE ARE A STORYTELLING PEOPLE

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INSIGHTS FOR LEADERSHIP

We need to help people imagine how the stories of their everyday lives are tangled up in a much larger, cosmic story of love, justice and renewal.

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